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WAS it H. G. Wells who once wrote of the "ironic silence" which follows a roaring, ramping newspaper campaign? We are all conscious of such a silence just now. What other remedy have we but laughter as we read of this sudden friendship between Mr. Baldwin and Lord Beaverbrook? Not a word about the spineless, weak-kneed semi-Socialism of Mr. Baldwin, not a word, for the moment at least, of the "firm hand in India" and all the rest of the stuff which only a few days ago composed "the one issue which confronted the Empire." The *Daily Mail* pats Mr. Duff Cooper on the back and Lord Beaverbrook, who declared that he would never retire from the struggle as long as Mr. Baldwin remained, has not even as much as a referendum to show as a *quid pro quo* for his complacence.

* * *

As for Mr. Baldwin—we suggested that he might need a reminder of his own words when some turn of the weathercock made the press peers once again his allies. Has Mr. Chamberlain, on his behalf, made it a condition of the new alliance that these fickle jades of newspapers are to reform? Are they to turn honest and, for instance, forbear to advertise themselves abroad as the best salesmen of foreign goods in England, while advocating Empire Free Trade over here? Are they to cease those illegitimate methods of propaganda of which Mr. Baldwin so justly complained? Or are they only to employ them in future exclusively for the benefit of the Conservative Party?

* * *

What is the inwardness of this odd story? Lord Beaverbrook's surrender—for such it appears since Mr. Baldwin has conceded nothing and retains a "free hand" without promising a "firm hand"—may be the result of several considerations. First, the campaign was bad journalism; secondly, it was unsuccessful politically, even in London. If it failed in St. George's, it failed everywhere. Thirdly, so far from weakening Mr. Baldwin's position, its effect was to rally round him even those Conservatives who approve him least. Lord Beaverbrook may have come to the conclusion that the best way to get rid of Mr. Baldwin was to leave the job to the opposition among his own rank and file. It is common knowledge that Conservative headquarters are frightened, not of the press peers, but of Mr. Churchill, whose Indian policy is attractive to all the more hot-headed and old-fashioned elements in the Party. We fear, therefore, that it would be a mistake to regard Mr. Baldwin as finally the victor. The Empire Crusade—or Anti-Baldwin Crusade—is not extinguished. One of Mr. Baldwin's enemies has retired—

for the moment—to give another more elbow room. That is all.

* * *

The All India Congress has, by an overwhelming majority, endorsed the Irwin-Gandhi agreement, and has appointed Mr. Gandhi to attend the Round Table Conference, with a large discretion as to making or accepting terms. This decision is, of course, an event of immense importance. Only the wildest optimist would have believed it possible a month or two ago. It is a personal triumph for Mr. Gandhi, and still more for Lord Irwin. But, though the first big rock has been circumnavigated, there are others ahead. The Congressites will no doubt make difficulties over the safeguards to be attached to the Constitution. What exactly they or Mr. Gandhi want—or will be prepared to accept—is by no means certain. Dominion status apparently is now *vieux jeu*; "complete independence" can be interpreted in various ways; and an "equal partnership, dissoluble at will," raises both theoretical and practical difficulties. However, now that the Mahatma really seems to mean business, the Conference ought not to break down on this point. A more serious matter will be the attitude of the Moslems. They were hardly represented in the Congress at Karachi, and the troubles at Cawnpore have shown how far the communal question is from being settled.

* * *

In face of Mr. Lang's default, the Australian Commonwealth Government has now accepted responsibility for the interest due on the New South Wales debt; and there has been an immediate rise in the Stock Exchange valuation both of New South Wales and of other Australian securities. It was indeed always most improbable that Mr. Lang's policy would be allowed to take effect; and we suspect that Mr. Lang himself always expected the Commonwealth Government to pay, and devised his policy far more with the idea of embarrassing Mr. Scullin than of causing the bondholders to go without their money. The Commonwealth, apparently, is now to sue New South Wales for the money, thus adding a legal struggle to the existing tangle of Australian politics. Meanwhile, Mr. Lyons and his friends have organised a new league as hostile to Mr. Scullin and Mr. Theodore as to Mr. Lang; and there are, in effect, three Labour Parties fighting for mastery. Politically, the situation could not well be worse than it is; but the fact remains that Australia is, at bottom, economically sound enough, though her public affairs have been badly mismanaged, and she is suffering severely from the present depression in the prices of her staple products. Neither in the short run nor in the long have the holders of Australian stocks any real reason for anxiety, unless they allow themselves to be perturbed by temporary fluctuations in Stock Exchange prices.

* * *

The French nervousness with regard to Germany at the present moment is well illustrated by the illogical comments on the emergency decree just promulgated by President Hindenburg under Article 48 of the Constitution. Article 48, to which recourse has been made previously both by President Ebert and by President Hindenburg, invests the national and State authorities with special powers to deal with political excesses. The situation which the new decree creates is not unlike that of the state of siege. The German public was becoming dangerously excited by the perpetual brawls and rowdyism of the Hitlerites on the Right and the Communists on the Left. Chancellor Brüning has therefore determined that some check must be put on these disruptive tendencies, and for a certain period the rights of both extreme parties to hold public meetings, to carry firearms, to wear uniforms, and to proclaim their provocative anti-Semitic and anti-religious propaganda from every housetop will be severely limited. It is obviously against France's interests that Germany should "go" Hitlerite or Communist. Yet a section of the French press sees in the promulgation of the emergency decree the veiled hand of Prussianism and a return to the more sinister forms of German militarism. Emergency decrees, even in special circumstances, may have their dangers, but could anything be more ridiculous than this attitude of the French, whose fear of Bolshevism is only equalled by their apprehensions of Hitlerism?

* * *

By a last minute intervention of M. Laval, the Prime Minister, France has been spared the calamity of a general coal strike. The post-war period of prosperity in the French coal trade came to an end some time ago, and recently the industry has been suffering from accumulation of stocks, loss of markets, and all the other obstacles of an economic crisis. The owners' reaction to the crisis was an attack on wages. They quoted the example of the Ruhr, of Holland, of Belgium, and of the Saar valley, and declared that, without similar reductions in France, they could not carry on. The attack began regionally. In February wages were reduced in the Loire district; in March it was the turn of the Midi. When the reductions were forced on the great coalfields in the north, the miners resisted, and after a series of fruitless negotiations between owners and men a general strike, to start on April 1, seemed inevitable. It was at this moment that M. Laval intervened, and by a compromise succeeded in averting a stoppage. The men will accept a reduction in wages. It will, however, be much smaller than the reductions contemplated by the owners. Peace has been restored. It may be only temporary. Certainly, the permanence of the settlement has not been promoted by the attitude of the French capitalist press in hailing M. Laval's arbitration as a triumph for the owners and a crushing defeat of Socialism.

* * *

The Consumers' Council Bill has been reintroduced in a slightly amended form, and has received its second reading in face of strong Conservative opposition. And at the same time United Dairies, through one of its officers, has launched a vigorous attack on the existing Food Council and indirectly on the Bill. Mr. Davies, on behalf of United Dairies, denies the Food Council's figures of costs and profits, and the charge of exploiting the public, and accuses Mr. Graham of seeking "despotic powers" to regulate prices on the strength of garbled evidence. Apparently, Mr. Davies claims that

the Food Council has no right to publish its own calculations of costs and profits without getting them agreed by representatives of the trade concerned. This view involves a denial of the Council's impartiality as an investigating body, and appears to give the trade a veto on any views about its conduct of which it may disapprove. For our part, while we agree that every body of traders should be given a full opportunity of stating its case, we hold that there is clear need, especially in view of the wide gap between wholesale and retail prices, for a body armed with compulsory powers to exact information and to protect the consumers' interests. Price regulation, we all know, is not an easy matter; and, if the Bill passes, the Consumers' Council will need to proceed circumspectly at first. But clearly the Food Council, without compulsory powers, is useless; and those who believe that *laisser faire* is not enough to safeguard the consumer will accordingly wish Mr. Graham luck, and hope for the speedy passage of his Bill.

* * *

If public opinion is not speedily aroused, it is clear that nothing will be done to remedy the shocking state of affairs revealed by Dr. Christie's report upon Liberia. Slavery for white markets is checked for the time—and only for the time—but the extortions and barbarities which the Liberian frontier force practises on the natives of the interior continues without check or mercy. The United States, which is the one power in a position to bring direct influence to bear on the Monrovian Government, is at present holding its hand, while the League of Nations (Liberia is itself a League member) is hampered by legal and political considerations. So far it has taken the totally absurd and unnecessary proceeding of sending out further commissioners to inquire and report. Meanwhile Dr. Christie and his expert report are available and neglected. Nothing less than a thorough overhauling of the administration of Liberia, a re-establishment of its finances and the construction of communications with the hinterland is any good. Only an international commission will serve the purpose, and it will not be appointed without great pressure from opinion in civilised countries. We suggest that a debate in the House of Lords would be a good way of calling attention to the problem in England.

* * *

Margaret McMillan, who has just died at the age of 70, was one of the pioneers of her generation. The beginnings of those labours which have latterly borne such generous fruit she made as a young woman under the auspices of the Bradford School Board, when public moneys could only be spent upon child welfare furtively and in the face of infinite obstruction. Later, in 1908, came the experimental clinic opened by Margaret and her sister Rachel at Bow; and in 1910 the extremely successful venture was launched at Deptford. These practical achievements went hand in hand with untiring propaganda. The medical inspection of school children was first sanctioned in 1907; the services then tentatively essayed have since achieved an important place among the constructive tasks to which the State has set itself. Their development is not yet complete but even as they stand they are a not unworthy monument to the woman whose genius created them.

There is far more than conventional regret in our lament for the death of Arnold Bennett. For us his death is a personal loss. He had been for some years a director of the NEW STATESMAN. He wrote occasionally in its columns, and for a long time in earlier days contributed a weekly *causerie* over the pseudonym of "Sardonyx." His interest in the paper was keen; his experience and his very critical yet generous judgment were always at its service, alike on the editorial and the business side. It is impossible to repay in print the debt of gratitude owed to him. In the weeks before his last illness he played an active part in the founding of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and he was a member of its Board of Directors. His place will not easily be filled.

* * *

All who came into contact with the man himself, or with his work, recognised his fundamental trustworthiness and solidity. These, though they are commonly taken for granted, are in fact rare qualities. Anecdotes and quotations cannot illustrate them; they only emerge on close acquaintance. It is hard, therefore, to say briefly about Arnold Bennett what is most to the point. Mr. Swinnerton tells us that Bennett once said to him: "It is impossible to know a man better without liking him more." If we dwell on this casual remark for a moment, it will suggest another significant quality in him—his constant kindness of heart. This at first struck one with surprise, because his eye was, so to speak, not a merciful one. He saw at once defects in human beings, and while loving life he was aware of its shortcomings. His mind was tough and positive, and he would have been an intolerably harsh realist in his work had not this intellectual disposition been tempered by exceptional sympathy. That made him a fine interpreter not only of character but of the grimness and ugliness of life in industrial centres. He could see fire when others only noticed smoke, and when we think of the realism of his work we are struck always by this interpretative and imaginative spirit that runs through it.

* * *

Arnold Bennett was the antithesis of the superior person, and though aware of the imperfection of everything there were few things he could make up his mind to despise. The pontifical tone he adopted in journalism was the result of a conception of the journalist's business. If a man undertook to publish his opinions, they should at any rate be definite. He was invariably severe on slackness or inefficiency, whether it was in the craft of letters or in the management of a hotel. But he was always ready to find in men the most admirable qualities as well as their opposites. In his private life, in business as well as personal relations, his steady and magnanimous reliability was never in question. Those who knew him might catch a glimpse of that detachment which made him an artist, and which yet did not seem detachment; for it was friendly and warm. The artist in him never raised him above his companion. His detachment included himself, and the artist in him stood behind the chair at the feast of life where Arnold Bennett sat as one of the ordinary guests.

FRANCE, GERMANY AND OURSELVES

MR. HENDERSON deserves all the compliments that have been paid him for his attitude in the latest European imbroglio. The situation created last week by the news of the projected Austro-German Customs Union was exceptionally serious. It is still serious. But the outlook is a good deal more hopeful, and for that we have to thank the qualities of prudence, honesty and firmness which have given the British Foreign Secretary the personal prestige that he enjoys and have enabled Great Britain to play the part she ought to play in the councils of Europe.

In his statement in the House of Commons on Monday Mr. Henderson showed a proper caution in withholding judgment on either the merits or the legality of the proposed *Zollverein*. But he did not conceal his disapproval of the way in which it was arranged by Berlin and Vienna. However confident Dr. Curtius and Herr Schober might be in the justice of their case, they must have known perfectly well that the project—particularly when sprung as a surprise and with all the appearance of a *fait accompli*—would produce a hullabaloo over half the Continent, and that such a hullabaloo would threaten disaster to the disarmament measures on which all men of good will and good sense have set their hearts. Perhaps they did not think of this. Or perhaps they did think of it, but judged it more urgent to make a gesture which would inform the world in general, and the German Nationalists in particular, that the time has come to challenge the restrictions of the Peace Treaties. In any case the business was bungled, and the right and the only remedy in all the circumstances is clearly to bring the matter, as Mr. Henderson proposes to do, before the Council of the League. Austria is perfectly willing to have the legality of the *Zollverein* thus tested; Germany demurs, but will presently come round, we believe. Both of them rightly object to political considerations (which in plain English means the French fears of the *Anschluss*) being imported into the case. That, however, can be avoided by its being referred, as it doubtless will be, to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

We shall not attempt to argue here the question of the legality of this Customs Union. The Germans and Austrians claim that their proposal does nothing to contravene the Geneva Protocol of 1922, which forbids Austria to alienate in any way her economic independence, and, having regard to the conditions and the machinery proposed, we are bound to say their case looks strong. But there are nice points involved, and however weak morally the French and Czech and Italian attitude may be, their legal objections cannot be lightly dismissed. Possibly the Permanent Court might take a middle view of the Union and decide that it was legal save in certain details, which could be modified without any great difficulty and without impairing the principle. Such a solution, avoiding the manifest dangers of a simple " Yes " or a simple " No," would be welcome to everyone who is concerned to de-balkanise the Continent. It might be grudgingly accepted even by the bogey-ridden French, and, once accepted, might help to weaken their obsession. We are not, of course, suggesting that there are any signs at the moment of a saner policy in France; the debate in the Senate last Saturday was ample evidence to the contrary. But we continue to hope, because we must. So long as she persists in her terror of, and animosity against, Germany, in her worship of the " security " fetish, in her belief in armaments and the support of satellite allies, there will be no real settlement of Europe.

Mr. Henderson said on Thursday that he " found French opinion in a very natural state of perturbation." No doubt it was natural—all too natural—on the short view which the French take, and which they fondly think is the long view. The French view is, in one word, that Germany must be kept down, and it does not trouble them overmuch if in this process the peace and progress of the whole Continent are thwarted. That may be natural; but it is a very long way from being justifiable. Of course, the Germans are not blameless; they can be undiplomatic, obstinate, irritating, aggressive. But nothing that Germany has done, or has left undone, in the last twelve years warrants the fears entertained of her in Paris or the treatment accorded to her. In fact, many of the mistakes she has made and the difficulties she has raised have been the results of the fatuous policy pursued against her by " the Allied and Associated Powers " in 1919, and by some of them, at French instigation, ever since. At the bottom of the present " natural perturbation " in France is, of course, anxiety about the *Anschluss*—the complete union of Austria with Germany. Such a union would, in our opinion, have great advantages, and we can see no good reason why it should be forbidden, if both countries want it. In point of fact, though there is probably a majority in favour of it both in Germany and in Austria, there are strong minorities in each which on various grounds are opposed to it. And nobody in either country, or anywhere else, supposes that Dr. Curtius and Herr Schober have designed the *Anschluss* for 1931. They have indeed been emphatic in their denials that the Customs Union is to be anything more than a purely economic arrangement. The French, and the others who have protested, pooh-pooh these denials. Such a commercial *rapprochement*, they say, will be the first step to political unity.

And so the fear of a greater Germany casting vengeful eyes across the Rhine, or across the Brenner, is to nip in the bud this effort at beginning the work, whose urgency everyone has been proclaiming, of lowering the tariff walls of Central Europe. Doubtless an Austro-German *Zollverein* would cause certain temporary dislocations and disadvantages to other States. But one does not need to be of the straitest sect of the Cobdenites to realise the importance of this step towards freer trade, and the balance of gain to the world that it promises. However clumsily prepared the plan may have been, and whatever may be the decision about its legality, a Customs Union between Germany and Austria is in itself a desirable thing from an economic point of view. If it should lead ultimately to a closer political union, we should see no cause for regret. For the present, however, that question does not arise—or, to be more exact, it does

arise but ought not to. The *Zollverein* is important enough to be treated on its own merits, and not confused with what it may lead to at some date in the more or less distant future. If the French say that a Customs Union cannot be considered apart from its possible consequences, they are wrong.

But the immediate necessity, as Mr. Henderson has seen, is to calm passions and to save the Disarmament Conference next February from being an utter fiasco. We are entitled to ask the Germans, for their own sake as well as other peoples', to get off the high horse and remember the larger issues at stake. But it is equally imperative that the French should change their tone. Not only M. Briand's political adversaries, but M. Briand himself, indulged in big and dangerous talk in Paris the other day. Objurgations and threats, references to 1914 and hints at another war—these are the words of maniacs. And for the President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate to think—if he really did think it—that Great Britain would give a " pledge of co-operation " in preventing a Customs Union between Germany and Austria is rank stupidity. Let its legality be tested by all means. If it is found to be legal, how in the name of common sense or decency can we be expected to oppose it? If the decision should go the other way, then there may be a strong movement of opinion in this country in favour of co-operation. But it will not be co-operation with France. Its aim will not be to use the treaties of 1919 to uphold economic nationalism and political servitudes, but to put those treaties in the wastepaper basket.

THE FREEDOM OF THE B.B.C.

UNTIL recently, criticisms of the B.B.C. were helpful, and attacks upon it harmless. Indeed it provided, among other blessings, a happy grumbling ground for the sedentary, where they could release their superfluous force. Old ladies who disagreed with what they heard could remove their earphones and shout " rubbish " into them, under the impression that the comment was transmitted to Savoy Hill. Old gentlemen, more conversant with the laws of science, could switch off the loud-speaker in the middle of a bar, rush for a postcard and scrawl upon it " Is this music? If so, I or it are mad." The postcards arrived, they were acknowledged suitably (the usual formula being " We are sorry the programme does not meet with your approval, and hope you may find something more to your liking next week "), and if not much good was done there was anyhow no harm. Grumbling is more helpful than silence. It shows the producer that his consumers are awake, and assists him to classify his markets. All old ladies are not alike, nor are old gentlemen; they seek different irritants, and the young have their preferences also. Every item in every day's programme pleases someone, and either bores or annoys someone else. This is a fundamental law of broadcasting. And anyone who is bored or annoyed can discontinue his license. That is an inalienable right.

This law, and that right, formed until lately a sufficient basis for the system, and the results were so good that we forgot it was the best system in the world. With the possible exception of Germany, no country could approach us. France and the United States are rotten with commercialism. " You have just heard Lamond playing Beethoven by courtesy of ——'s Face Foam, the cream that makes the cuticle glad," runs a typical transatlantic announcement; the French favour lingerie; Italy and Russia advertise their respective bureaucracies. Great Britain alone kept her ether comparatively free and decent and encouraged the formation of opinion. The public grumbled or made suggestion in their capacity of individual listeners. The officials, enlightened and independent, did not attempt to conciliate —only a fool would do that—but they catered for opposing needs, and they maintained, apart from their catering, a belief in education. Their educational policy has been admirable. We were given facts, we were trained to interpret them, and thirdly—and this was the most important of all —we were asked to tolerate the interpretations of others. This last is not an easy task, but unless it is achieved all education remains dangerous. When the " ban on controversy " was lifted, a victory was won for enlightenment. The public were treated like grown-up people, who are capable of hearing both sides of a question, and consequently there was a chance of the public growing up. Our country was doing a great work not only for itself but for humanity, and the motto on the cover of the *Radio Times*, " Nation shall speak peace unto Nation," was not an empty promise.

Perhaps we grumbled too often. If we did, Nemesis has descended, bringing all the powers of darkness in her train. For the easy days are over, brightness falls from the air, and the conflict has begun. The B.B.C., because of its success and growing importance, is being constantly attacked, in the pulpit, in Parliament, in the Press, and the attack is on new and dangerous lines. The aim is suppression. When suppression has been achieved, control may be attempted, but suppression is the immediate objective. The cry is not for fuller programmes but for feebler. The critics say, not " put this in," but " miss that out." One of these critics, the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh, expresses this attitude in its simplest form. He is complaining that certain speakers with whom he disagrees have been allowed and even invited to give their views, and he goes on to say " It will probably be replied that sound Christianity is also broadcast, but this is no reply." Of course, the Cardinal's attitude is not typical of all his co-religionists—of Father Martindale, for instance—but it is typical of all critics, whatever their views, who adopt the new method of attack. They are outraged because somebody else has been allowed to speak. They would rather no opinions were expressed if their own are to be challenged. They are the old ladies and gentlemen of the past, but embittered beyond belief, and organised to kill.

The storm centre of the moment is, of course, Russia. Anyone who troubles to read through the programmes will see that talks on Russia are infrequent, and that conservative opinions have been amply represented, as they are amply represented on all topics. But this is not enough for the critics. They want suppression. Lord Radnor, who sounds like an old gentleman but is in years a youngish one, denounces broadcasting in the House of Lords because Mr. Harold Nicolson says a good as well as a bad word for the Soviets, and because Mr. Maurice Dobb has lectured on the Five Years Plan. The *Morning Post* borrows a policeman's whistle, and blows it every few days, or hires a pavement artist to do a cartoon entitled " Moscow calling." Letters are published, written by retired colonels or signed " Bournemouth." And the burden of them all is that we must be told less about Russia, not more, and that except for a reiteration of atrocities, all events in a great country are to be ignored.

The obvious retort to such rubbish is to ignore it, and this is what the B.B.C. still professes to do. Officially it is too grand to take much notice of the *Morning Post* and journalism generally, and it would probably deprecate rather than

welcome an article such as the present one, which suggests that it is in need of help. "I am responsible only to God and the Postmaster General, and I can well look after myself," is its attitude when challenged. Unfortunately its dignity is only superficial. It does yield to criticism, and to bad criticism, and it yields in advance—the most pernicious of surrenders. The episode of *Krassin saves Italia* is the most recent example of such a surrender. *Krassin saves Italia* is a German radio play, which deals with General Nobile's Polar expedition, and with the rescue of his crew by a Russian ice-breaker. The facts are historical, and the theme is the triumph of science, transcending national barriers in the hour of danger, and enabling men to save the lives of men. The play was passed by the B.B.C. authorities some months ago, and was in full rehearsal. Then, two days before production, it was withdrawn. The officials, in a communication to the *Times*, explained that it would be given later on, when Mr. Cecil Lewis, the English producer, had completed some other work on which he was engaged, and they implied that the change had been made to meet his convenience. But, unfortunately, the *Times* published in the same number a letter from Mr. Lewis himself. He seemed far from grateful. Indeed, he accused the B.B.C. of having no policy but expediency, and of withdrawing the play because of political pressure.

> If the barometer of public opinion is fair, they take risks if it is stormy, they beat a retreat. The officials, hounded by governors, foreign ambassadors, Government departments, Press, and public, are engaged in a constant guerilla warfare. One of their ablest men is employed solely in countering, coaxing or coddling the unruly elements of public opinion into silence or acceptance of a police which has no more stability than our climate.

The play was evidently withdrawn because certain fanatics objected to the ice-breaker being Russian, and bullied the authorities into reversing their decision. Probably a press campaign was threatened, or further questions in the House. The episode is not in itself important, but it gives us a sinister little peep behind the scenes. We can imagine the pressure that is brought to bear on any controversial subject, and, as Mr. Lewis points out, everything that rouses interest is controversial. And if we admire the B.B.C. for the work that it has done and is still trying to do, we may well ask ourselves what is its best way out of its difficulties, and whether we, in our humble individual capacities, can be of help to it.

There would seem to be two roads of escape. The first is to turn the programmes into an eternal Children's Hour, where nothing that rouses adult emotions shall be admitted. All is relative; and here, too, there may be controversy, for some listeners will prefer Jack Bones and his Band, and others clamour for the Pilkington Quartet. But the pressure from neither side will be severe. Classical music is a riskier proposition, for the Pilkingtonians and Bones's will combine against it, and the fact that so much of it has been composed by foreigners will further weaken its appeal. Education must cease, for it leads to the formation of opinions, and of contrary opinions. The News Bulletin must also be stopped, because news must be selected before it is announced, and selection is the most potent form of comment. Perhaps an occasional reading from Mrs. Gaskell—but no, that is going too far; she contains within her the germs of Industrial Unrest. A little music for a very long time is the best, and why, while we are about it, should not this music be performed by the courtesy of somebody's Face Foam?

The other road of escape lies through many difficulties, and the B.B.C. cannot be expected to take it unless they have the active support of their well-wishers. It is not easy to resist bullies and naggers even when, constitutionally, your position is a strong one, and there is always a tendency to listen to the critic who makes most noise, and to feel that he represents the thousands who are silent. There is no reason to suppose that he does. A large body of decent opinion is probably on the side of the Corporation, and now is the moment for it to express itself, and to demand that the activities of the last few years shall be continued. As Mr. Lewis puts it, "If your job is holding a balance, you can keep the pointer steady by putting nothing in either scale, but you can also keep it steady by putting a ton in either scale," and an audience of adult listeners ought to vote for the heavier weights. Unless they do so, the talks in particular will become flimsy and tend to disappear. And the talks, although they may not be listened to widely, and although they may not leave much that is definite behind, do promote tolerance, which is education's crown; they do, by their very variety, remind listeners that the world is large and the opinions in it conflicting, and they make the differences vivid and real to him, because their medium is the human voice and not the printed page.

E. M. FORSTER.

A POLITICAL PROPOSAL

IT is a well-known fact that the House of Commons is overcrowded, overcrowded to-day as it has never been before. Members have hardly a single place where they can work; there is little room for them in the Library; they have to queue up—so the story goes—they have actually to queue up for a wash. Naturally, they cast envious eyes at the House of Lords, and not a few of them have made a serious determination to annex that part of the Parliament building where the Peers reign supreme. Disadvantages there would certainly be in doing away with so venerable an institution, an element of the picturesque would pass entirely from our lives; but think, say they, of the advantages. Think of the convenience, think of the comfort, think of the cleanliness, imagine for yourself the stupendous amount of work that would get done.

But *it is not always necessary to go the whole hog.* Nor, having broken an egg is it always necessary to throw its contents into the fire. A good housewife knows that it will come in well for scrambling. The House of Commons can well acquire every inch of space at Westminster; let the Lords find diggings elsewhere. The demand for physical continuity is the concomitant of a purely materialistic philosophy. Perhaps they might find a *pied-à-terre* in some forgotten part of Whitehall or rear a mighty building on the Surrey bank of the Thames. But these plans would not really answer. An attractive site is needed. It is not as if the House of Lords were a public-house. There is no need to make a public-house attractive; it is attractive to most people just because it is a public-house; it has an intrinsic attractiveness denied to every Parliament House in the world, and denied especially, I fear, to the House of Lords at whose bar so few are found to congregate. Very few noble lords would trouble to cross the river or care to be found awake in Whitehall. No, let the Lords follow the example of the great London Schools, of Charterhouse, of Christ's Hospital: let them migrate to the country.

The advantages of such a scheme are obvious directly it is broached. The English aristocracy at its best has always been a landed aristocracy. The English peer has always been happiest surrounded by his tenants, treading the ancestral acres, scenting a field of beans in June, laughing at the bark of a dog, hearing the nightingale at midnight, and being awakened by the lark's song in the morn. The newer peers, indeed, have never really got the hang of the thing. They have been men of the city and the

mart, of the newspaper office and the board room: they have seldom known the difference between a collie dog and a retriever. And that is why they have not been properly respected. Send them to the country, and they will learn a thing or two; they will become changed men; plutocracy will be mellowed into aristocracy; the man who has sold his acres will recover them again. Furthermore, by this plan, the pressing problem of attendance would be solved. A man would turn up at an evening debate if he could be certain of a round of golf in the afternoon, if the home waters were well stocked, and the estate plentiful with game.

So would the House of Lords have the air of a glorified house party. The Peers would:

> Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin
> Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn.

All touch with the Lower House would not be lost. The annual cricket fixture would, of course, still be played. There would be a Loud Speaker installed in the Library so that Peers might listen-in of an evening to the more important debates at Westminster. Black Rod would be granted a motor bicycle, but the King's Speech would be relayed by wireless. There would be a House of Lords' Rambling Society, which would organise rambles to St. Stephen's. (A charming precedent for this is the annual visit of the Blue-Coat boys to London.) Not every Peer would be able to attend these rambles. There would be a ballot for places, as there was for the trip on the airship R101.

Great Britain has long groaned beneath a plutocracy. She sighs for the days of the landed lord. By this scheme every lord would be landed. Many of the world's best books have been written in prison; much of the world's best thought has been done in exile. The Peers would be voluntary exiles for the good of the realm. Their sacrifice would be made enjoyable; they would have a fancy-dress ball every now and then, and wear their robes of office. But for the rest they would live apart, voyaging through strange seas of thought alone. The village yokels would raise their caps to them in the street. American visitors would gaze upon them from afar. By one superb gesture they would save aristocracy and save our nation.

H. G. G. HERKLOTS.

ECONOMIC NOTES ON FREE TRADE

II.—A REVENUE TARIFF AND THE COST OF LIVING.

FREE Traders have been long accustomed to use as an argument against a tariff its effect on the cost of living. In ordinary times there is no purpose, quite the contrary, in raising prices. But before making this objection in present circumstances, we must be quite sure that it is properly applicable to-day and is not just parrot talk from the past.

It is generally admitted that the root of our present troubles is to be found in the disparity between costs and prices, with the result that output cannot be sold, or men employed, at a profit. Does any sensible person believe that there can be a remedy which does not either diminish costs or raise prices? If so, it is not in itself an objection to a proposal that it does the one or the other. If our desire is to further the interests of the working-class, we must compare the consequences of one kind of remedy with the consequences of another.

When the *Economist* complains against a revenue tariff that it will increase the cost of living of the working-classes, I know that these are crocodile's tears. For in the same breath they propose alternative means of raising the same amount of revenue by taxes on beer, tobacco, sugar and tea, and demand a reduction of 10 to 15 per cent. in the level of wages. Several, however, of the correspondents to the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION have not provided in their letters sufficient evidence to permit of a diagnosis. For example, would Mr. Ramsay Muir deplore a rise in world prices? Is he opposed to all indirect taxes on articles of working-class consumption? Is he hostile to every reduction of wages, such as the railwaymen have just suffered? If not, it is a question, not of discussing a particular proposal in isolation, but of making comparisons.

Obviously a rise in world prices or a reduction of British wages would, if we could get them, be much better than a tariff for our export industries. But this belongs to a different branch of the argument and must be treated as such. If we are to take as our test the effect on working-class standards, my proposal of a Revenue Tariff comes out very favourably, I maintain, as compared with the alternatives. Its exact effect greatly depends, of course, upon whether or not it includes taxes on imported food. My proposal, which included such taxes, would be most unlikely, in my estimation, to raise the cost of living by so much as 2 per cent., and if food taxes were left out and the tariff were to apply only to manufactured and semi-manufactured goods, it would be unlikely to raise it by so much as 1 per cent. I consider these effects to be no greater than those of other indirect taxes and negligible compared with wage reductions. In former controversies the comparison was between a tariff and an increase of direct taxation, whilst wage reductions were not in question. To-day it is different. If the other advantages which I claim for a Revenue Tariff—its favourable effects on employment, on business confidence, on the balance of trade and on the Budget—are well founded, then its reaction on working-class standards, so far from being objectionable, can be claimed as a further advantage, because it is so small compared with those of the alternatives.

I appeal for a reconsideration of the whole matter with a fresh head, and a clear one. It is easy to go on repeating what one has been accustomed to repeat, unaccompanied by any new process of cerebration. Yet the conditions of the problem are so different from what they used to be that one has—at least, so I have found—to think it out all over again with a new apparatus of thought. For never before have we had to consider what it is best to do in face of an enduring and a large-scale disequilibrium. We have generally been concerned, not with the problem of how to get out of a very tight place, but with what will be the best long-run policy *assuming conditions of equilibrium*. May I also register a mild complaint against the undercurrent of moral reprobation which I detect in some quarters? I seem to see the elder parrots sitting round and saying: "You can *rely* upon us. Every day for thirty years, regardless of the weather, we have said 'What a lovely morning!' But this is a bad bird. He says one thing one day, and something else the next."

J. M. KEYNES.

[Next week Mr. Keynes will contribute a Note on: III.—The Reaction of Imports on Exports.—Editor, *N.S. and N.*]

TAKING CRITICISM WELL

MR. FRANK SWINNERTON, one of the most intimate of Arnold Bennett's friends, observes of him that he took criticism better than any writer he has ever known. This may seem a small thing to single out for praise in a man of genius who, despite a comically ostentatious air of worldly wisdom, possessed a fund of real wisdom both of the head and of the heart beyond

most of his peers—who was in some respects, perhaps (as *Clayhanger* shows), one of the wisest men of letters of his time. But to be able to take criticism well is no such common characteristic that admiration can be withheld from it, and it was as a result of his essential wisdom that Bennett accepted the buffets of criticism as philosophically as he accepted the bouquets. It was not that he was indifferent to praise. There are, I suppose, a few proud writers who are careless as to what their fellow-mortals think of them and their work, and there are a very few whose blood flows so genially that even a vitriolic attack, if it is sufficiently clever, only makes them wish to meet and shake hands with the critic who has attacked them. I remember talking to one of these genial monsters at a time when Crosland had been dredging the dictionary for epithets to fling at him, and how, as his eye lit up with pleasure at the vituperation, he said: "I should like to meet Crosland and see whether he really thinks the things he says about me." It is true that it is easier to bear berserk vituperation than anæmic disparagement, and many authors will tell you that they do not care how much they are abused if the thing is skilfully done. As most authors believe, however, that all hostile criticism of their work is stupid, the occasion for enjoying a skilful attack seldom occurs. Bennett, however, so far as I could judge, never regarded his censurers as stupid. "Good chap, isn't he?" he asked me, about a young critic who had just been doing his best to scarify his latest book: "I liked some of his things." He had a fine sense of justice that prevented him ever from forgetting that, if a critic attacks a book, it is ten to one because he did not happen to enjoy it, and he would have upheld the right of any man to say what he believed, not only about the universe and its mysteries, but about the works of Arnold Bennett.

A man's ability to take criticism well is, of course, no measure of his genius. Men of great genius have been as sensitive to disparagement as men of no genius at all. It was said of Tennyson that he could be flung into the depths of misery by a disparaging comment in a paper of no importance of which he had never previously heard. We are told again in the new biography of Edmund Gosse that, after reading a review of one of his books—a review that to an ordinary eye would seem laudatory—he wrote round to his friends in the spirit of a man who had been badly mauled by a wild beast and round whom they should rally in sympathy. Many writers, in their sensitiveness to criticism, remind one of the Princess and the pea. "'I scarcely closed my eyes all night long,' said the Princess, 'goodness knows what was in my bed. I lay upon something hard so that I am black and blue all over. It is quite dreadful?' Now they saw that she was a real Princess, for through the twenty eiderdown quilts she had felt the pea. No one but a real Princess could be so tender-skinned." A single sentence in a review has made many a writer feel that he was black and blue all over in the same fashion. I have heard one writer of genius confess that, even if he were given a column of praise, the critic had only to insert the single sentence, "But, of course, Mr. —— has the defects of his qualities," in order to turn the honey into gall. There are writers for whom reading their press-cuttings is apparently a form of self-torture, and the odd thing is that no writers read their press-cuttings more assiduously. It is said of one writer that he was ordered off press-cuttings by his doctor as a drunkard is ordered off whisky, but, when a man has once acquired the taste for press-cuttings, it would need an army of doctors to keep him away from them. It is strange that men should deliberately return to what merely makes them miserable. But the ultra-sensitive man, if he were unable to read the worst that people were saying about him, would suspect that they were saying something worse still. Thomas Hardy appears to have been cursed with this ultra-sensitiveness. He read what his contemporaries wrote about him, and even a casual referenee to him in a column of praise as a "pessimist" was enough to make him wince. It is easy to understand why a young author who has bills to pay and whose very livelihood may be affected by the verdict of the critics, should be distressed by a harsh comment in an influential paper. It is not so easy, however, to see the reasonableness of an author whose position is secure and who is none the less perturbed by the judgments of his contemporaries. It may be that even the man of genius has two opinions of his work—the one intoxicating, the other disheartening—and that he seeks support for his intoxication and relief from his disheartenment in the printed words of others. His very doubts about the permanence of his fame may make him all the greedier for the praise that reassures him. If this is so, his love of praise may be attributed to his fundamental modesty.

Considering how great store authors set by the judgments of critics, it is remarkable how little good they have to say of them. It is almost invariably the author who is most sensitive to criticism who abuses the critics most vehemently. Now, undoubtedly, there are many bad critics, but there are not so many bad critics as bad authors. Authors sometimes speak contemptuously of "the critics" as though all critics bore an unpleasant family resemblance to each other, yet critics do not reply in kind and speak of "the authors" on the assumption that Wordsworth is on the same level as Martin Tupper because he followed the same profession. The only sane view of critics, as of authors, is that a few have great talents, the majority have middling talents, and the rest have none. In this they do not differ from statesmen and clergymen and athletes and drapers. They are for the most part honest men and women who make a profession of what is everybody else's pleasure—saying what they think about other people. Every human being is a born critic, whether in politics, in morals, in manners, or in the arts; and, unfortunately, every other person whom he criticises is resentful of his criticism, except, perhaps, in politics. The world of politics is the critic's paradise, in which it is possible to declare in print that an eminent statesman is utterly incompetent and that through his incompetence he is dragging his country into ruin, and yet, however sensitive he may be, to cause him no visible annoyance. This, I suppose, is one of the blessed results of the party system. Owing to the party system, the political critics are divided into recognisable groups, and no statesman expects—as a matter of right at least—a word of praise from the critics who belong to other parties than his own. I am sure that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, if he ever reads Press-cuttings, does not allow his night's sleep to be broken by nagging memories of what the *Peebles-shire Conservative Courier* has said about him, and I doubt whether Mr. Winston Churchill, for all his love of giving tit for tat, would feel that he could not let the sword sleep in his hand till he had made mincemeat of the leader-writer on the *Huntingtonshire Labour Sentinel*, who had declared that he was the greatest menace to civilisation since Attila. Politicians discover at an early stage of their career that a larger number of their fellow-countrymen have an extremely low opinion of them, and they learn to expect as a matter of course to be told in print that they are not fit for their job. They know that behind all this there is no personal malice, that human beings differ in opinion and in taste, and that great statesmen as well as small have been the objects of vituperation. As a result, statesmen will endure with a nonchalant smile criticism that in any other sphere man would resent as calumny.

I almost wish that the party system could be introduced into literature, in order that here, too, the ordinary man might learn to take criticism with equanimity. There are a Right and a Left in literature as well as in politics; and, if this were generally acknowledged, the authors on the Right might be less easily disturbed by the assaults of the critics on the Left, and the authors on the Left by the misunderstandings of the critics on the Right. It may be replied that such a division did once exist in the days when *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly* attacked Leigh Hunt and his friends so mercilessly. But the division at that time was political rather than literary, and, in striking at Leigh Hunt's poetry, the critics of the Right were really striking at his politics. There can be no useful literary criticism along those lines. One might as reasonably judge Gladstone's statesmanship by his translation of Horace's *Odes*.

Possibly, however, writers—both authors and critics—are too individualistic ever to permit the inauguration of the party system in literature. And the only resource of the author in face of the critic who thinks little of his work will remain, as of old, philosophy. Of all the ills of life, the philosophic author will tell himself, a bad review is the most fleeting in its effects and the most endurable. There have been such things as damaging reviews, but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it is the book itself, not the review, that does the damage. For this and a hundred other reasons it is best, like Arnold Bennett, to take criticism lightly. This is advisable both on Stoical and on Epicurean grounds—and, no doubt, to the ultra-sensitive, impossible on any ground at all. Y. Y.

CODA DA GALLO

The Italian police are carrying on a campaign against the use of foreign words, especially in shop-signs and hotel names.

HOW noble, in each of its manifestations,
Is the patriot fervour of disciplined nations!
But few to so lofty a frenzy can reach
As the Fascists, reforming their national speech.
Their country already is purged from pollutions
Like alien ethics, ideals, institutions;
From Parliaments (places where liberty's taught),
From freedom of speech, and from freedom of thought.
Now, to crown the good work, it is firmly decreed
That the land must from all foreign phrases be freed,
And the prefects have orders to chase these invaders
From the sign-boards of shops and the bill-heads of traders.
There were wretches, desirous the tourist to please,
Who advertised openly, "Afternoon Teas";
The police have been round, and they'll do so no more;
Nor will "Bridge-Room" profanely appear on the door.
No menus in French will henceforward be written,
And 'tis doubtful if "golf-balls" with "clubs" may be smitten;
While the late "Hotel Bristol," repenting with shame,
To "Firenze" or "Padua" changes its name;
And in bars we must ask, though the Yankees may mock,
For a *coda da gallo*—the tail of a cock.
"It is thus," cry the Fascists, with voices sonorous,
Taking time from their leader in disciplined chorus,
"That a State is made fit for imperial sway,
And the soul of a people preserved from decay."

P.S.—We have just heard a plausible rumour
Of a brand new decree to cut out, like a tumour,
That most alien growth—a perception of humour.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

THE TARIFF ISSUE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Many people besides Mr. Tremlett have found it difficult to reconcile the statement that imports are paid for by exports with the exhortation to "Buy British Goods." May I suggest that the difficulty lies in the indefinite form in which the statement is phrased. To give a meaning to the statement that imports are paid for by exports, it is necessary to define the period of time over which the transaction takes place. Over a short period of time it quite obviously is inaccurate. Imports can be paid for by raising a foreign loan, by cancelling a foreign credit, and by many other means, without for a number of years having to export goods or services of a corresponding value.

If, however, we qualify the proposition and say that *over a long period of time*, or *sooner or later*, imports are paid for by exports the truth of our statement is obvious.

To realise the connection between this statement and "Buy British," one must recollect that British industry is always in a state of flux, of discarding old processes or designs and evolving new ones, of adaptation so that it can make the most lucrative use of the world's ever-changing opportunities.

Under our present fiscal system, the pressure of international competition steadily drives us to adopt the methods most suited to our needs, and to direct our efforts into the most lucrative channels. This in the long run in generally to our national advantage. But the process inevitably involves at least a momentary dislocation, unpleasant both to Capital and Labour.

When, as at present, the methods and direction of our industry are regrettably out of touch with world opportunities, the pressure of foreign competition becomes extremely exhausting, and there is then much to be said for some method of relieving the strain. In so far as "Buy British" means paying more for patriotic reasons, it is a method of giving such relief; thoroughly justified, I believe, because unlike fiscal protection it creates no legislative vested interests, automatically ceases to impose any burden on industries as price levels adjust themselves, and is not conducive to the many political abuses connected with tariffs.

I suggest, therefore, that while, in general, there is every reason for adhering to all the implications involved in the theory that exports pay for imports, at the present moment such practice may, with justification, be modified by making some sacrifice to "Buy British."

I realise, of course, that there are other aspects of the "Buy British" campaign. It may, for instance, be directed to new sources of supply which, when developed, will on pure economic grounds be able to hold their own. The Empire Marketing Board and National Mark organisation give numerous examples. But this is not, I think, the problem which Mr. Tremlett raises, and on which I hope my letter has cast some illumination.—Yours, etc.,

The Davids, L. J. CADBURY.
Northfield, Birmingham.
March 24th.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Sir Leo Chiozza-Money, the redoubtable author of 100 *Points against Protection*, 100 *Points for Free-trade*, *Money's Fiscal Dictionary*, and similar works on the tariff question, chides me very severely for arguing that when it is cheaper to procure a commodity abroad than to produce it at home, there is a presumption against fostering the domestic production of that particular commodity. To argue that the test of cheapness is a test of the comparative suitability of an industry to be domiciled in any particular locality is, he suggests, to exhibit that remoteness from the affairs of everyday life which makes the professional economist suspect in the eyes of plain, homely people.

Unfortunately, Sir Leo does not suggest any substitute for this test, whose general validity, at any rate as a first approximation, has never to my knowledge been questioned by serious economists. It is surely not a very conclusive argument against the buying of Belgian steel by British shipbuilders to argue, as he does, that it was in England that coal was first raised on a large scale, that railways were invented in this country, and that it was here that iron ore was first successfully smelted with coal fuel as long ago as 1750. I seem to remember that at one time—anterior, I admit, to the publication of the Trade Returns which Sir Leo says he has studied so carefully—England was called the granary of Europe. This does not prevent me from believing that the

decline in cereal cultivation which has taken place in recent years—Sir Leo will correct me if I am wrong—has been accompanied by economic advantages. Nor does the fact that we once exported large quantities of wool, and at the present time have any amount of surplus capacity in potential grazing ground for sheep, cause me to lament as a great disaster the arrangements whereby we now procure the bulk of our raw wool from abroad. Sir Leo seems to argue that certain industries are "basic." They provide materials, but "much more than that." This seems to me just rhetorical mysticism. An industry is "basic" in the economic sense—I leave out of account military requirements—just so long as the conditions of demand and supply make it "basic." To argue that when demand changes it must be preserved because it is basic, is a most flagrant begging of the question.

But Sir Leo has not only failed to make himself plain on the general theoretical question. He has also got the facts of the particular case he is pleading very gravely out of perspective. Sir Leo makes it an argument for the protection of the British iron and steel industries that "we have plenty of iron ore and limestone." I should have thought that it was notorious that, ever since the 'seventies, changes in the technique of iron and steel production had necessitated the importation of increasing quantities of foreign ores into this country. Sir Leo tells us that he has been studying the Trade Returns for the last forty years. I wonder how he managed to miss the highly disquieting fact that between 1891 and 1913 the imports of iron ore into this country rose from some three to seven million tons. Why did he keep this from us if he was studying the returns so intently?

As regards the subsequent stages of production, it is fairly clear that in recent years the production of crude iron and steel has tended to some extent to go the way of our production of iron ore. We have become more dependent on foreign sources. But it is by no means clear that those branches of the industry which depend on these crude products have developed so unfavourably. The finishing industries have progressed and our exports there have grown. Important branches have become dependent on the cheapness due to free imports. Sir Leo may think it desirable to jeopardise the employment of workpeople in these sections in order to safeguard the more "basic" sections, but, so long as they satisfy the price test while the others do not, I find it difficult to share his opinion. I do not wish to deny that, in the present situation of certain parts of the industry, there are involved political and economic problems of very considerable complexity. But I do not think that the solution of these problems will be hastened either by the sensational manipulation of heterogeneous statistical aggregates or by summary dismissal of the conclusions of elementary economic analysis.

May I make a suggestion to Sir Leo and to all those erstwhile Free Traders whose devotion to the statistical *status quo* leads, in times of stress, to precipitate advocacy of discriminating protection? It is this: that, whatever new views they may acquire about the "basicness" of "basic" industries, they should at least hold their hands until the severity of the present world depression has abated and we are in a position to see just where we are. During a slump, we all tend to think that the end of all things is at hand; and there is very real danger that silly things may be done which will be hard to undo afterwards. If discriminating protection is ever to be justified, its justification will be seen most clearly when world trade is once more normal. We can then act calmly and with due deliberation. In 1886, in circumstances very similar to our present situation, the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Depression of Trade recommended a tariff of 10–15 per cent. on manufactured imports. The reasons for this recommendation were precisely the same as the reasons which have been adduced in support of the present proposals—prices falling more rapidly than costs, the rise of tariffs elsewhere, foreign export bounties, the decline of "basic" industries, the widespread existence of "surplus capacity," the parlous condition of iron and steel. I do not believe that either Mr. Keynes or Sir Leo Chiozza-Money would argue that we should have done well to accept that recommendation then. I do not believe that we shall do better to accept their recommendations now. But in any case let us refrain from panic, and apply long-period expedients only when the long-period situation has revealed itself.—Yours, etc.,

LIONEL ROBBINS.

10 Meadway Close, N.W. 11.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—"There can be no doubt," we are informed by Mr. Durbin in your issue of March 21st, "that the power of the world to buy our exports is limited by the volume of sales the world makes to us." And it is only fair to suppose that Mr. Durbin is prepared with equally unperturbed convictions to make the appropriate reply to the question that Mr. Tremlett, in your same issue, addresses to professional economists. "If imports are paid for by exports, what is the point," asks Mr. Tremlett, "of the exhortation 'Buy British Goods'?" Mr. Durbin's answer must certainly be that there is no point.

If this answer is correct, there is clearly no reason for restricting it to the buying of British goods by people who happen to be British citizens. It applies with undiminished force to the buying of British goods by foreigners. May we assume that in Mr. Durbin's opinion it is stupid to try to persuade foreigners to buy more of our goods and, indeed, wasteful for the Government to spend the taxpayers' money in promoting trade connections with foreign countries? For if we *did* succeed in increasing the aggregate volume of our exports, would not the foreigner be obliged to pay us with an increased volume of imports, so that increased employment in export industries would be compensated by increased unemployment in those industries that are subject to foreign competition in the home market?

It could, of course, be argued that it is desirable to increase employment in the export industries, where unemployment is very great, even at the expense of an equal reduction of employment in other industries, which are less seriously depressed. But there is, on Mr. Durbin's principles, a far simpler method of effecting such a diversion. "The power of the world to buy our exports is limited by the volume of sales the world makes to us." Our aim, then, should be to *increase* the volume of our imports—it would, indeed, be an extraordinary coincidence if the volume of our imports were exactly such that, while it was desirable not to diminish them, it was equally desirable not to increase them—and this could be brought about most simply by *raising* the level of our costs. Enable the foreigner to compete more easily in our home market and he will be provided with the means of buying a correspondingly increased volume of our goods. Or has something, after all, gone wrong with the argument?—Yours, etc.

King's College, Cambridge. March 26th.

R. F. KAHN.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. J. M. Keynes's somewhat crude Protectionist proposals have at least had the advantage of attracting to your columns a vast number of letters, and I hope that you may find room for one from a good old-fashioned Protectionist. Most of Mr. Keynes's critics base themselves on the price effect of a tariff, overlooking the fact that the larger scale of production rendered possible by the existing Safeguarding duties has enabled us to reduce our costs, and has enabled the Safeguarded industries as a whole to maintain a much more favourable position in the export trade than is true of the non-Safeguarded industries.

Mr. Ramsay Muir, using the old argument, professes that middlemen's costs, etc., will be added to the tariff, and that the actual cost to the consumer will be something very much greater than the import duty; but this, however, entirely begs the question, and Mr. Ramsay Muir cannot quote me any examples, except that of one size of gas-mantle, where particular circumstances apply, in which the prices of Safeguarded articles have not declined since they were Safeguarded as least as much as the general decline in manufactured goods as a whole.

Mr. E. M. F. Durbin, in criticising Mr. Keynes's view on the Balance of Trade, entirely forgets that a purchase has to be paid for whether made from a foreigner or from a Briton, and when it is made from a Briton both he and the Briton who purchases find employment; whereas, in the former case one Briton and one foreigner find employment.

It really is time that a few Free Traders start to think the whole problem out *ab initio*, instead of repeating the rather absurd unintellectual phrases which for three generations have done duty as arguments in defence of Free Trade.—Yours, etc.,

351 Abbey House, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

HERBERT G. WILLIAMS.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Will Sir L. Chiozza Money tell us how many of the 400 blast furnaces are as much out of date as compared with American or Continental furnaces as the primitive iron smelting still, I believe, carried on in remote corners of the world. I visited the other day an important centre of iron manufacture and

recognised the blast furnaces as the same I had seen forty years ago. I visited the Carnegie steel works in 1906. At that time our blast furnaces were toys compared to those being used in the U.S.A.

Is it not also true that most of the steel from abroad is a cheap steel for constructional work, made by the Thomas Gilchrist process, and that a large proportion of the pig iron is of a special kind used in our production of steel?

Finally, it may comfort Sir L. Chiozza Money to know that our output of steel for 1929 was a record, beating the output for 1913 by 2,000,000 tons. When the industry has been reconstructed, old plant scrapped and the latest methods introduced we can begin to discuss protective duties.—Yours, etc.,

22A Buccleuch Place, A. P. LAURIE.
Edinburgh.
March 27th.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As an exporter on a fairly large scale, I confess that I am not reassured by Mr. Keynes's note on the Export Industries under Protection. Clearly our position will not be improved. Mr. Keynes does not conceal his fear that it may be slightly injured.

I wonder what Mr. Keynes would have to say to a notion which has recently occurred to me. Why not attempt to neutralise the damage done by a tariff on imports by utilising the proceeds to confer a bounty of similar dimensions on exports? This would surely do all he desires for the sorely pressed import industries, while at the same time it would provide a much needed stimulus to our languishing export industries. I am afraid I am no economist; only a poor business man anxious to make both ends meet in bad times, but I confess I have not yet been able to discover a fallacy in this proposal.—Yours, etc.,

The Chestnuts, L. J. HARGREAVES.
Dingley Road,
Lower Surbiton.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Norman Leys has brought an interesting and important subject into the correspondence published in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION concerning Mr. J. M. Keynes's article. The problem of National Debt millstones which all the European countries have hanging round their necks and the internecine tariff walls are at the bottom of the helplessness of those countries in attempting to overcome the present world-wide depression.

Every country which took part in the War 1914–1918 is suffering from two evils: money squandered in senseless destruction and a web of tariffs which has been a cause of endless strife. Tariffs tend to work in a vicious circle. They are introduced to alleviate post-War depression and to encourage new industries. These lead to serious friction, treaties, counter-treaties, jealous groups. The antagonism between these jealous economic groups deepens and eventually ripens into war. This leads to vast unremunerative expense in men and wealth, and saddles the future generation with all the ill-effects of war, including the terrible drag of a huge National Debt. To bolster up production once again tariffs are introduced.

Our generation has to pay for the folly of past generations which, through the shortsightedness of their commercial antagonism, were responsible for the devastation of the War. We are saddled with the fruits of their criminal stupidity, an atrocious National Debt, and now we are asked to put one more loaded gun into the armoury of international strife, for it is more than probable that vested interests would prevent the abolition of a tariff when the crisis is over. The cure for the present situation is international co-operation, not international fratricide.

It is the child who is always out for himself. He wants a toy and he fights for its possession with his brothers and sisters. Grown men and women co-operate for their mutual benefit. The child is purely individualistic in outlook; the grown-up realises that he is a member of a community to which he brings his labours and from which he obtains his necessities, and that only by co-operation can this be done smoothly.

Tariffs have failed in Germany, the United States, the Dominions and in all the Protectionist States. Now more than ever the introduction of a tariff would be a negation of international co-operation, in which the only hope for a peaceful future lies. Are we to remain, like our forbears, so many children fighting in the nursery, or are we to grow into sane men and women? To attain our majority we may have to scrap the present system of private ownership or amend it, just as children outgrow their individualistic ideas and acquisitiveness: growing pains are no reason for refusing to grow, for perpetuating and encouraging the nursery stage and nursery squabbles.

Finally, a policy of Nationalism is bound in the long run to defeat its own ends. Only in an atmosphere of peace and amity can a country hope to prosper. Such measures as tariffs can only postpone that amity for the duration of their existence. Each new tariff is an international catastrophe certain to react on every nation: each new tariff is a step backwards in our nursery stage.—Yours, etc.,

The Vicarage, Cricklade, Wilts. M. D. L. DICKSON.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I hope I may not be doing Mr. Keynes an injustice by suggesting that the core of his argument for a revenue tariff might be expressed in a few phrases, and that not only have many of his critics not criticised it, they have not perceived it. His basic assumption is that the country *must attempt some policy of expansion.* Every known policy of expansion will, however, threaten the sterling exchange rate. It will compel us to abandon the gold standard, unless special measures are adopted for strengthening the exchange rate. The one possible measure, in his view, is a revenue tariff.

It seems possible to touch this argument only at four points, by demonstrating:

(1) That a policy of expansion is undesirable; or
(2) That such a policy will not affect the exchange rate; or
(3) That measures, other than a revenue tariff, can be found for supporting the exchange rate; or
(4) That it is better to let the exchange rate go.

—Yours, etc.,

Liverpool. J. R. BELLERBY.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The figures given by Sir Henry Page Croft seem to me to be a triumphant vindication of the Free Trade theory. If the relative populations of the four countries mentioned are taken into account the result is an amazing tribute to the soundness of the Free Traders' contentions. Will Sir Henry give us the same figures worked out on a *per capita* basis? No Protectionist has ever yet dared to do so.—Yours, etc., T. S. CURTIS.

60 Shepherd's Hill,
Highgate, N. 6.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The Chairman of the Empire Industries Association, Sir Henry Page Croft, sent you last week some interesting figures relating to the Export of Manufactures from leading commercial countries; and like all figures they can be considered from more than one point of view.

His point was that other countries are increasing their trade, in comparison with England, by very large percentages.

The other side is the remarkable fact which he brings out that the 44½ millions of the United Kingdom export under their modified Free Trade system £430 millions of manufactured goods, while the United States of America, with a population of 122 millions, and a very complete protective tariff, can only export £495 million of manufactures. They have almost three times the population, but are only some £60 millions above us in this trade. The same may be shown of Germany. Their population is 63 millions, compared with our 44 millions, they have a complete system of protection, but even with their reparations they do not export more than £422 millions, considerably under our figures, though with reparations they are gradually surpassing us. It is true that with this continuous outcry for keeping our trade at home, and refusing to deal with other countries, since the War, our commercial supremacy has been declining considerably. We have to thank those who protect home industries to the injury of foreign trade for this. The more we buy from our rivals, the more they will have to ask us to send them in return as payment for their goods.—Yours, etc.,

Woodhurst, HERBERT A. DAY.
Norwich.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—What do they teach the pupils at the London School of Economics? Does Dr. This lecture for an hour and then hand the unfortunate youths over to Professor That, who contradicts all the doctor has said; and so on throughout the

day? I have seen many bewildered looking Orientals emerge from the portals in Houghton Street. It seems remarkable that astronomers can agree in the fabulous figures of the distances of the stars, and that biologists have no hesitation in telling us what a horse's foot was like fifty million years ago, but that no economist can forecast the effect of a fifteen per cent. revenue tariff without being contradicted by his fellow-experts.

I think I shall bring my son up as a Professor of Economics. It will not matter whether he knows anything in particular so long as he has the gift of indiscriminate prophecy.—Yours, etc.,

12 Primrose Hill Road, Hampstead, N.W. 3. G. H. BOSWORTH.

A DANGEROUS LIAISON

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In view of the public embrace which has just taken place between Mr. Baldwin and one of the newspaper "harlots" (h's own word) it is interesting to note that the previous embrace of the early summer of last year produced, nine months later, the St. George's election. *Sit omen.*—Yours, etc.,

Killerton, Exeter. F. D. ACLAND.

MR. SNOWDEN'S PROBLEM

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—With you, I agree that Mr. Keynes sells the pass with his imports taxation for revenue purpose, but if he and the full-blooded Protectionists of the Unionist Party are to be defeated the new taxation must be more real than that which you propose. You say more is to be taken from beer, tobacco, wines, spirits and entertainments tax. Now the consumption of beer, wines and spirits has fallen heavily within the last two years. What are the duties or taxes that will yield more from articles already overtaxed? Also you advocate "a considerable tax on land values." What would the basis of your taxation be? Having taxed them and depreciated the value of the land, you would also lose the Income-tax and possible Super-tax from the holders of those lands. I cannot see where the gain to Mr. Snowden would be. I have never been able to see the justice of taxing beer, wine and spirit drinkers and smokers so very heavily. Taxation should be just. We have reached the limit of taxation of these articles. Let us all pay Income-tax. Begin with a small amount on wages of £2 a week and grade it upwards and not penalise citizens because of their habits. This tax could be easily collected by employers by issuing books and stamps like Health Insurance and Unemployment. There should be justice in taxation to the rich as well as the poor.—Yours, etc.,

Edinburgh. OLD LIBERAL.

WOMEN IN THE POTTERY TRADE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The National Societies of Pottery Workers have withdrawn their demand for the abolition of women dippers and placers, and the danger of a stoppage on March 25th last has been averted. While the dispute was pending, the Women's Freedom League, feeling it necessary to understand this situation, sent a special investigator to the potteries to find out what is really going on there, and what justification, if any, the National Society of Pottery Workers has for making so strange a demand. Our investigator, Miss Lenton, sent us a very interesting report, and I am sure that some excerpts from it would be of interest to the general public. Miss Lenton says:

> I watched the dippers' and placers' processes in three potteries, Wedgwood's where no women are employed either as placers or dippers, Myott's which employs many women placers and a few women dippers, and Ridgway's where there are a few women placers but no women dippers. I gathered that the Trade Unions want women to be turned out of these branches of the industry, and their places taken by men, because the employment of women is a definite disadvantage to the men. They do not say this publicly, but give as the reason that the work is unsuitable for women. A dipper is a person who dips unglazed articles into a glazing mixture generally containing lead. It is contended that women should not be allowed to do this because they might get lead poisoning. I pointed out that according to statistics a greater percentage of men in the potteries than women were afflicted with this disease. I was told that the reason for this was that women were better looked after than men. For example, if they can commence work before 9 a.m. they must by law be provided with milk or cocoa made with milk. Stress was laid on the fact that a mother might transfer the poisoning to her child. The women dippers whom I saw would not admit that through their work there was any special danger to the future generation. . . . One young woman . . . produced four children suffering from lead poisoning inherited from the father.
>
> In my opinion the root cause of the agitation on the part of the Trade Unions is that women dippers undercut men. This is the real grievance. . . .
>
> Women whom I saw employed in this work at Myott's looked intelligent, healthy and cheerful and were working hard, laughing, joking and singing as they did so. They apparently enjoy their work and certainly they do not want to lose it. The men argue that if women are going to work in the processes at all, they must be prepared to do their fair share side by side with men.

Those who read this objective report with an open mind must admit that the men in these factories do not take an unreasonable view with regard to the disadvantages which they suffer under present conditions. Their position as dippers is being menaced because women are paid lower wages for doing the same work and as placers because women have all the light work at low pay and men have no respite from the excessively heavy work. They naturally clamour, therefore, for the dismissal of their women competitors. But to turn women out of work which they can do is no just remedy for this grievance. There is a remedy for the problem.

Let the Trade Unions demand that all adults employed in the dipping, placing and drawing processes be given equal pay, and that restrictions shall apply to the nature of the work and not to the sex of the workers. If this were done, men and women would be in a position to apply for this work on equal terms, working under equal restrictions and entitled to get equal pay. It is probable that some of the women placers who are now employed would lose their jobs, for there is no doubt that the average man is more fitted for heavy physical labour of this kind than the average woman, but there would be nothing to prevent the exceptionally physically strong woman from competing for this work on the same terms. Equal pay for equal work means that the best and the most capable worker gets the job.—Yours, etc.,

E. PETHICK-LAWRENCE.

HANGING

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Wain's letter in your last issue contains a suggestion, "Is it not probable that a form of painless extinction—such as the lethal chamber—might persuade many of the opponents of the death penalty to take another view?" At an inquest the medical authority concerned invariably states that death was instantaneous. Does Mr. Wain suggest that there is a more expeditious method of carrying out the death penalty?—Yours, etc.,

82 Elm Park Gardens, S.W. 10. HENRY CLEEVE.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In the letter on "Hanging" in your issue of March 28th, your correspondent does not seem to be aware that murderers are nearly always one-crime men. Also, I believe it is a fact that no murderer after discharge from "life" sentence has yet been known to repeat his crime. One of the best reviews of the subject is to be found in *Life and Death in Sing Sing*, by Lewis Lawes, the Warden of Sing Sing.—Yours, etc., G. C. ADENEY.

5 Brighton Grove,
Rusholme, Manchester.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Do the many persons who sign petitions for the reprieve of a convicted murderer really believe they are doing him a kindness in prolonging a life which can be but a life in death? When it has been proved beyond doubt that the accused is guilty and is considered unfit to live again with his fellow-men, is it not far more humane to put an end to his life than to condemn him to the blank hopelessness of hour after hour, day after day, month after month—which mount into years, of an existence devoid of all that makes life worth living?

Even if a "life sentence" means twenty-five years, to be turned out into a new and changed world at the age probably of fifty may be an even bitterer experience than the years of prison.

That modern science could improve upon the method of capital punishment cannot be doubted. Let it be made painless and instantaneous. Prisoners in many instances have committed suicide in order to escape long imprisonment. In cases where any doubt exists as to guilt, capital punishment should, of course, not be ordered. But in the majority of cases not a shadow of

doubt exists. Why inflict years of suffering? It is certainly more "revengeful" than a painless end.

As for the crowds of Sadistic persons who assemble outside a prison when aware that an execution will take place, why need they be informed either of day or hour?

The bulk of the persons who have signed a successful reprieve petition never give another thought to the man whose "life they have saved."

Under the best of circumstances life to most of us is a series of lost illusions and much suffering, relieved by some compensations. What compensations has the lifelong prisoner?—Yours, etc.,

London. M. E. DURHAM.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Can nothing be done to remedy or control a public evil which threatens to assume proportions which may do us irremediable damage? I refer to the action and attitude of the Press in the sensational murders of which we have so plentiful a crop at present. That accused persons on trial for their lives should be subject not only to the inevitable stresses which the processes of the Law involve, but also to the attentions of muck-rakers, interviewers, and theorists is unjust and offensive to all decency. In a recent case where the verdict itself upon the apparent evidence has left many of us very uneasy, a flood of obscene details, over which a section of the Press has gloated, preceded and accompanied the legal proceedings. A man, driven to the last limits of human endurance, in face of the end, who breaks down in sheer animal terror, as a crowning indecency, cannot even be spared the bestiality of a commercial Press which must needs headline it and make money out of it. Can nothing be done to stem it? Could not reports and comment be limited in some such way as they are in divorce cases, or the laws controlling contempt of Court be invoked?—Yours, etc.,

2 Maryland Street, Rodney Street, Liverpool. ARTHUR FITCH.

EPSTEIN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your last week's issue Miss Helen Thomas protests against what she thinks are "vulgar gibes" about Mr. Epstein's "Genesis." She also on her own confession does "not know what Mr. Epstein means by his statue." Perhaps the people to whose remarks Miss Thomas takes exception do understand Mr. Epstein, or, at least, think they do.

According to Miss Thomas, Mr. Epstein has expressed for us the mystery of life and illumined our darkness. She, however, does not know what all this is about. In one breath she declares that she is in darkness and she beholds light, which, as Euclid would have said, is absurd.—Yours, etc.,

50 Howitt Road, N.W. 3. S. P. PURI.

THE ANTI-BOLSHEVIK CREED

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Michael Farbman says: "Yet not a single observer who has been studying social and labour conditions in Russia has borne testimony to the existence of forced labour."

If your contributor will deign to ask *any* sailor who has been loading timber in the White Sea district, he will get more "testimony to the existence of forced labour" than he really seems to want.—Yours, etc., TORSTEN CEDERLUND.

Horn, Sweden.
March 26th.

SQUEAK AND GIBBER

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Although I am afraid the following observations must seem crude and tame compared with Mr. Aldous Huxley's brilliant article, yet I hope, if only as an example of what an ordinary "man in the street," making no profession to speak as a scientist, may be thinking you may find a small corner in your really valuable columns for such observations.

Mr. Huxley's alternative to "Squeak and Gibber" is, "Given a reasonable amount of luck it is possible to live a not intolerable life." Pretty dreary outlook, this. However much one may be in agreement generally with Mr. Huxley's rationalism, even from a rationalistic point of view, is not such a conclusion *too* dreary and depressing?

The supreme urge of nature is at all costs to reproduce and maintain life (and so far as I can gather no one knows even what life is). But this resistless power, and man's present inability to grasp its meaning or the infinite and eternal, leads to many anomalies and absurdities in his activities and conduct. But if to conscious, ultimately reasonable human beings "a not intolerable existence given good luck" is nature's final word and man's final destiny, surely hara-kiri would be reasonably preferable?

Again, although the Platonic and Christian theories of immortality may be unscientific, is it not possible that they may have, hidden within them, a germ of sanity sufficient to justify the continuance of existence and an outlook less depressing than that suggested by Mr. Huxley, as well as consistent with the law of evolution?

I gather that the view of scientists is that complete annihilation of matter is impossible.

The imponderable spiritual life, the existence of which is evidenced as a fact, more particularly by those beings counted as "cosmically conscious," has done more towards helping nature in its irresistible "life" urge and sustaining man in his journey towards the unknown than all the "matter" in the world or material power.

Why, then, is it reasonable to contemplate the utter uselessness and complete annihilation and destruction of the spiritual life?—Yours, etc.,

Horsham. F. CATESBY-HOLLAND.

We have again been unable to publish more than a small selection from our correspondence.—Ed. N. S. and N.

Miscellany

ARNOLD BENNETT

WHEN he was thirty-five Arnold Bennett published anonymously a little book called *The Truth About an Author*. While it has the fascination—especially for those who knew him and loved him—of all his personal writing, it contains a good deal of rather trivial and unconsidered work. It also contains three passages which give a clue to all his major books, three passages by which any sympathetic reader can discover the best in Arnold Bennett's work. In the book's opening pages he speaks of himself as one

> Who am so morbidly avaricious of beauty that I insist on finding it where even it is not.

Later on he declares that

> At twenty-one I know that I had read almost nothing of Scott, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës and George Eliot,

and that when, a year or two later, he became a free-lance journalist in London,

> I was absorbing French fiction incessantly; in French fiction I include the work of Turgenev, because I read him always in French translations. Turgenev, the brothers de Goncourt and de Maupassant were my gods. I accepted their canons, and they filled me with a general scorn of English fiction which I have never quite lost.

It is only by an understanding of these confessions that the true character of Arnold Bennett's work can be gauged. He was a sensitive, shy, impressionable man, who so longed after beauty in his boyhood that he could, born and bred as he was in the hideous surroundings over which he has cast a rich veil of romantic loveliness, find beauty in everything, from a Burslem tram to the laundry-basket of a mammoth hotel. He had to have beauty or starve, and so he found beauty where it was not, and gave it back to us. For him, as for all of us, beauty was frequently a question of contrast and comparison. Few men, if they were honest, would refuse to admit that their first visit to a large restaurant, with its gilt and its generous spaces, did impress with a sense of magnificence their boyish imaginations. Bennett never lost this power to be impressed by that kind of spectacle, for he always saw, somewhere behind or beside it, the mean streets, the cheap houses, the harsh and gritty ugliness of those towns in which he had forced himself to find beauty.

The influence of this hunger for beauty which had to be satisfied in such an uncongenial place never left him. It is at once the strength and the weakness of some of his most characteristic work. He is here in extreme contrast with George Gissing, the only one of his English predecessors with whom he can be compared. Gissing was made angry or desperate by the sordid conditions of the lives he drew; Bennett found in human pluck and determination a beauty which he could transfer to the conditions. In that most charming of his lighter novels about the Five Towns, *Helen with the High Hand*, he makes the most southern of readers see how the girl's beauty of spirit is enhanced by the dour and drab circumstances; and years afterwards, in *Riceyman Steps*, he can extract an austerer and more terrible beauty from circumstances more sordid and more depressing. In this power to make men admit the power of moral beauty—and here Bennett is a true disciple of Ruskin—lies the strength of his passionate determination to see no ugliness where the spirit of man has worked in ardour and in hope. Its weakness lies in his tendency to admire human effort when its results are not genuinely worth the achieving. If there are men of immense organising capacity running mammoth hotels, they ought not to be; they ought to be running the business of the country, and not wasting mental energy on the provision of grossly expensive New Year's dinners for hundreds of people. There is beauty in extravagance—but it dies away when extravagance becomes organised and commonplace.

It would be too violent to call Bennett's early ignorance and continued indifference to the great English novelists a disaster; but his passion for the Frenchmen (which was for the Naturalists) did, I believe, very gravely divert his natural genius. I say this without prejudice, although I would willingly defend the English against the French, and believe that *Vanity Fair* is a greater book than *Madame Bovary*, and *Great Expectations* than *Une Vie*. Still, for some authors the French model is the better. Mr. George Moore, who anticipated Arnold Bennett in trying to acclimatise the naturalist novel, and Mr. Kipling, whose short stories would have been very different had he not read Maupassant, are both authors whose work has obviously gained by its contact with Paris. But both George Moore and Rudyard Kipling are cosmopolitans; Arnold Bennett was pure English, if ever we had a pure English novelist. He was as English as Fielding or Trollope, and when he subdued himself to the discipline of the French naturalists, he gave up something from which his more serious work would have gained enormously. He gave up spontaneity. *The Old Wives' Tale*—which he finished just after he had completed his fortieth year—is a masterpiece: the two sisters, Sophia and Constance, might have been painted by Ingres. The book is terribly moving, its appeal is extraordinary; its detail has the learned perfection that Flaubert gave to his detail—but it is not a free book. I never feel that the author has completely effected that miraculous release of his characters, that release which is so complete in certain masterpieces that we discuss the faults and virtues, the habits and characteristics, the past and the future of the imaginary characters with a greater sense of reality than that with which we approach our friends' characters. Arnold Bennett knew everything about Sophia and Constance, and can tell us everything; I do not think that at any moment in the book he really doubted or speculated about their behaviour; or that he knew that not to know everything is the final test of wisdom. The absence of freedom from *The Old Wives' Tale* is, I believe, due to the fact that in following the French novel Arnold Bennett was unconsciously writing against the natural inclination of his genius. It is for this reason I prefer the *Clayhanger* trilogy to the more perfect book; for here the master influencing him is far more Balzac than Flaubert, and it is with Balzac, if with any French novelist, that Bennett's natural affinities lie. In many of his lighter books Bennett wrote much more loosely to the naturalist formula. In the fantasias—what a good thriller is *The Grand Babylon Hotel*—he evidently enjoys his licence; but it is no less enjoyable both to the author and to us in that superb comedy *The Card*, in *Buried Alive*, in *The Regent*. He is as conscientious in these books as in his more ambitious, but in them he is not watching himself with severity, but with self-indulgence. He is enjoying his own ingenuity, and can make the reader see that, even though he does not directly tell him so.

When one looks at the long list of Arnold Bennett's books—novels, plays, criticisms, essays, travel—it seems incredible that a man who was thirty before his first book was published should have accomplished such a mass of work in thirty-three years. Not the least of his claims to our remembrance will be that he put an unknown country on the map of English literature. He is as definitely the novelist of his Five Towns as Trollope is of Barchester or Dickens of London and Kent: for when he journeys in his books to London or Paris, whether he is on sea or land, he carries with him the tang and the directness of A Man from the North. Lawrence Ridware in *Whom God Hath Joined* finds London

> The home of a race sad, hurried and preoccupied; the streets were filled with people who had not a moment to spare, and whose thoughts were turned inwards upon their own conscious solicitudes, people who must inevitably die before they had begun to live, and to whom the possession of their souls in contemplation would always be an impossibility.

There were times when Arnold Bennett thought thus about London and Londoners; and he was always gallant in defence of the greater reality and truth, in spite of its lesser elegance or refinement, of life in the provinces. London never conquered him; and in some of his habits—he hated not to be in bed at midnight—he never yielded willingly to London fashions. It is this which gives to his novels of London a particular, pleasantly acrid, flavour. They are written by a man who insists on submitting the metropolis to his own standards; by a man who is evidently in that of which he writes, but not of it. London was still a surprise to him, pleasant or unpleasant. And there lies the secret fascination of all his work, a fascination which prevails even in those who dislike some of it—all of it has an indescribable freshness, a quality of genuine curiosity, a note of intelligent enthusiasm. He was, all his life, interested: and a man of whom that can be said will not fail to hold the interest of his fellows.

R. ELLIS ROBERTS.

IMPERIAL GALLERY

THE Indian section of the Imperial Institute wears a dejected air. The dusky little models of peasants and weavers are chipping and withering away. Have the curators never read in John Aubrey's *Miscellanies* the chapter on *Omens*? Are they so ignorant of the elementary principles of magic as not to know the sympathy between effigies and their prototypes? It bodes ill for our relations with India that the miniature ryots are crumbling in their glass cases; if only for the sake of superstition, their thews should be strengthened. Besides, the Imperial Institute has an example to set. Provincial museums, which too often fill up their space with makeshift shoddiness, ought not to find a precedent there.

But after passing these *disjecta membra* of the Empire, a happier prospect meets the visitor, for the Institute shelters the exhibition of the Imperial Gallery of Art. It is a collection, so far as this country is concerned, of nearly all the talents. Messrs. Sickert and Matthew Smith are not represented among the painters, nor Messrs. Epstein and Dobson among the sculptors. Yet the show is a remarkably good one for the ground it covers, and anyone who wishes to get a cynosure of contemporary English achievement, and has no time to attend a number of one-man exhibitions, should certainly visit it. There are a few works also from the Irish Free State, India and Newfoundland. Some of the Dominion Governments, we are informed, have been prevented from contributing by financial considerations. It is a pity that when States economise, art almost always falls beneath the axe, and the policy, so far as " come-hither " propaganda is concerned, is surely a short-sighted one. All over the West-end of London, the Dominions spend money on lavish shop-window exhibitions of natural productions. A little advertisement of their intellectual and artistic amenities would not much increase the expenditure and would greatly increase the beguilement. When such an opportunity as the Imperial Gallery offered, it was folly to refuse.

As it is, we must be content, and well content, with our native offering. The general impression is of a very healthy activity. Our artists have at present arrived at a period of direct painting, and the walls at the Institute are filled with many evidences of what may be considered contemporary accomplishment as distinct from the sort of picture painted ten years ago. There is a devotion to the thing seen, for its own sake, and a determination to render it in clear colour and strong line. The experiments of cubists and other doctrinaires of technique are at an end, but their tendency survives in the uncompromising naturalism of most of the canvases. Mr. Porter's *River at Richmond*, Mr. Coxon's *Betchworth* and Mr. Cundall's *Regency Square* are excellent examples of the modern landscape, and, placed together on the central wall, make a fine and united display of artistic principle. Each is characterised by fidelity to natural form, carried out at the expense of atmosphere and even of composition. Anything in the nature of set piece or the impression is eschewed; there is no concession to the picturesque and very little to architectural balance. But within the almost fortuitously-chosen scene there is a vivid drama of planes and values. The scene provides its own excitement, without arrangement or association. And the same object is followed out and achieved in other branches of painting such as Mr. Meninsky's splendid still-life and Mr. Lamb's portrait. Mr. John's *Pink Cyclamen* shows his sympathy with the direct methods of the younger artists, whom he in a large measure anticipated, and while much of the interest of the exhibition consists in noting the contemporary drive, such pictures as Mr. Steer's *The Muff*, Sir William Orpen's *Hazy Morning* and Mr. Newton's *Twilight in Cornwall* are of interest in marking the line of cleavage.

The new achievement itself is but another point of departure. For the present, the exclusive interest of the contemporary painter in the object for its own sake is satisfying enough. It implies a retesting of formulæ and a refusal of second-hand approach, and thus forms a welcome and necessary preparation for new statements. It is the creation of the means of an expression which has yet to become significant, to reach out from isolation and find its intellectual and spiritual context. The Imperial Gallery exhibition marks the end of one generation and the beginning of another.

T. W. EARP.

WORDS AND MUSIC

MR. ARTHUR BLISS, says that well-informed critic, Mr. Eric Blom, may still baffle us, but " it is by his diversity, his fertility of apt invention, his ever-fresh adaptability to a new purpose, not by any tentative search after the uncommon." That there is a baffling element in Mr. Bliss is shown by the fact that one was prepared for almost anything on going to hear the first London performance of his new work *Morning Heroes*, a symphony for orchestra, chorus and orator, given at the B.B.C. concert last week. That Mr. Bliss has ideas nobody could deny. The man who wrote *Rout* and the *Colour Symphony*, and who discarded, after having conceived it, the idea of a " ballet with a brass band answering the orchestra from the gallery " is obviously fertile in some direction. Personally, I regret the still-birth of that brass-band ballet. To me, in imagination, it sounds better than any of the other works of Mr. Bliss's that I have heard, even after hearing *Morning Heroes*. But the production of this latter work, a work of large dimensions lasting an hour, requires one to make an attempt at sympathetic criticism.

Mr. Bliss has some literary sense; this is shown by his choice of words for *Morning Heroes*. The symphony is divided into five parts, described as :

I. Hector's Farewell to Andromache (from Walter Leaf's translation of the Iliad, Book VI.).

II. The City Arming (consisting of forty-seven lines from Walt Whitman's *Drum-Taps*).

III. Vigil (consisting of a poem by Li-Tai-Po, set for women's voices, and some verses of Walt Whitman's set for men's voices).

IV. Achilles goes forth to Battle (a setting for chorus and orchestra of Chapman's translation of the nineteenth book of the Iliad, beginning " The host set forth," and ending with the roll-call of heroes).

V. Now Trumpeter for thy Close (consisting of a poem by Wilfrid Owen, " Spring Offensive," and a setting for chorus of a poem by Robert Nichols, " Dawn on the Somme ").

The rational connection between these poems is clear. They all deal with war; preparation for battle makes intelligible first and second movements; the battle seen from a distance in contemplation by the wife of the Chinese soldier : " Swiftly her thoughts fly to her beloved one, who is at war, and whose blood perhaps reddens the snow," is admirable material for the slow movement of the symphony, whilst variety in this movement is got by using Walt Whitman's " By the bivouac's fitful flame " for the second section, and giving the first section to women and the second to men. But the rest of the symphony is still concerned with preparation, and there is no battle except for Wilfrid Owen's poem, which is spoken by the orator, making the climax in the last movement. This remarkable poem could not fail to make an effect, if tolerably well spoken, and Mr. Basil Maine, who was the orator, and who had the extremely difficult task of declaiming " Hector's Farewell " and Owen's " Spring Offensive," succeeded admirably in finding a convention which was effective.

It is obvious that Mr. Bliss had devised an excellent framework; there is nothing apparently defective in the plan of his work until the fifth part, the last movement of the symphony. Here he has chosen a poem, Owen's *Spring Offensive*, which does not lend itself to musical treatment, and Mr. Bliss has recognised this fact by having it declaimed

by the orator. But the same is true of "Hector's Farewell," which also is declaimed. On the other hand, Walt Whitman's words and "Achilles goes forth to Battle" lend themselves perfectly to choral setting, and are accordingly so set. Having recognised this, it is strange that Mr. Bliss has not perceived that these two groups do not and, I shall say, cannot coalesce. A "symphony," a harmony, or consonance of sounds, is just what *Morning Heroes* is not, because its parts are not musically related, but only rationally related. If we examine Berlioz's works, such as the *Symphonie Fantastique* or *Harold in Italy*, where he has worked to a programme of literary inspiration, we will find that everything is achieved musically, and words are never—not even in the *Faust* music—allowed to pull their full weight or used as Mr. Bliss uses them, for their own sake. But those who are not great sticklers for formal perfection would be prepared to accept the imperfect unity of *Morning Heroes*, and even find, perhaps, a pleasure in the contrast thus achieved, however illegitimate, if Mr. Bliss had been more successful in the musical part of his symphony. Unfortunately I could find there nothing to admire or enjoy. The music is not only derivative, without anything fresh and individual, but it is not particularly effective, as Elgar, even in his more banal moments, can be effective. In fact, I cannot help feeling that if Mr. Bliss could listen to his music critically without all the literary associations he has connected with it, he would himself realise how far from his conception it has turned out to be.

And this points to the great danger there is for any artist who is not only susceptible to influences outside his medium (which all artists must be in so far as they are human), but is also stimulated to production by them. The bane of modern music (I mean music since Schubert) has been description. Of all music descriptive music is the most quickly boring, the most easily superficial, and the most alluring to those, composers and auditors, whose musical faculty is not very highly developed and independent, but is still associated and involved with other faculties in the conscious mind. There is, perhaps, no such thing as a pure musical faculty. There are musicians whose bias towards dense concentrated harmony is so strong that barely and thinly harmonised, *linear* music always seems to them empty. One of the critics of the *Times* is a musician with this bias, for I have noticed that he can never appreciate the music of Berlioz, and the way he writes about such music is the way all musicians who have this strong craving for dense harmony feel about such music. Then there are musicians who crave for logical counterpoint and enjoy the dullest and emptiest of fugues more than the most charming and delicate of Italian arias. But both these types are specifically musical. Far more elementary is the type for which the primary elements of quick and slow, loud and soft, pathetic and joyful, exhilarating or terrifying are the chief if not the only factors. There are those listeners who care most about programmes and literary associations, and I should say that a very high percentage indeed of audiences belonged to this type. It is the type to which a number of well-known composers have belonged, for it requires talent to use these elements effectively in musical composition, and there are even degrees of talent within each particular province. I would put Dame Ethel Smyth as a composer into this class, and I begin to fear that Mr. Bliss is of this category too. If so, there is still no reason why he should not produce good and effective music of that kind; but to do so he must learn to judge his music detached from all associations, and see how far he has succeeded in expressing purely in music the sensations or moods that he is concerned with.

W. J. TURNER.

CORTONA

THE sun sinks; the hills
Darken; through the shivering olives
Sweeps the northwind; sadly, coldly
Fades the daylight.

In my heart too fades,
Winter-chilled, the genial courage
And clear hopes the dawn had kindled.
But lo yonder,

Glancing through the boughs,
The new moon's bright sickle! Straightway
From my heart that wintry shadow's
Frost is lifted.

R. C. TREVELYAN.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

A German Masterpiece

SUNDAY night in England is the hour for adventures in the world of the theatre; but many Sabbaths have surely been broken since an audience encountered anything quite so disturbingly moving as Wedekind's tragedy of adolescence, presented for the first time in this country by the Sunday Theatre Club at the Grafton Theatre. *Spring's Awakening* is a work of genius. It has faults—glaring, indefensible faults which will tempt you, on occasions, to shrug your shoulders at what you have every right to describe as wanton morbidity, faults of overpitching and sentimentality—yet the sum total of the impression which this production leaves is almost overwhelming.

For ordinary men and women the troubles of adolescence have become, in retrospect, either fanciful unrealities or tragi-comedies to be dismissed with a smile. Yet the agonies were real enough at the time, and in *Spring's Awakening* we see them again, writ large by the pressure of a peculiarly rigid and cruel environment upon hypersensitive spirits, whose very destiny, it seems, is to tear themselves to shreds in an effort to grow up. Their conflicts are externalised. The awakening of sex, and the terrible bullying of first responsibilities result in rape, abortion and death, suicide, and the reformatory with these young Germans of 1890, who take themselves with such burning seriousness, utterly cut off as they are from the grown-ups by adult hypocrisy and "discipline." But in Wedekind's play, the lurid colour of the events serves only to enhance his fundamental sincerity, and the actual conditions of German school life in his day were sufficiently grim to provide him, did he require it, with chapter-and-verse justification. There are two precipitators of tragedy in *Spring's Awakening*—a rigid examination system, forever playing upon a boy's natural fear of being a failure and overloading his shoulders with a spurious, needless burden of responsibility, and the complete failure of the adults in the play to help the children through their sex difficulties by sympathy, courage and honesty. These, though in a modified form, are still found to-day.

So frank and fierce is the challenge in this play that there is a temptation to ignore the skill of the dramatist in the urgency of his "message." But *Spring's Awakening* is far more than a painful pamphlet. The logic of the action sweeps forward with astonishing vigour, and the characterisation, within the bounds of its dominant neuroticism is compellingly vivid. There is one dangerous error of construction. It is not until comparatively late in the play that the full power of the adult forces which are twisting awry the lives of Wendla and Melchior and Moritz is made clear; and in

the first two or three scenes one receives an impression of a group of very unhealthy young people whose obsessions lack external causation—mere leaves from a psycho-analyst's notebook. There is, unquestionably, a rather typical piling on of morbidity and cruelty, such as one finds regularly in the post-War German dramatists. If only one of these schoolboys would stand up and fight. . . . But, as I have suggested, these blemishes cannot be allowed to weigh overmuch in judging a play which has also some exquisite moments of lyrical beauty and tenderness, and in which there is pity and terror beyond nearly all contemporary drama.

Mr. Ralph Neale has proved himself the heaven-sent producer of this play. There is no one in London to touch his sensitive appreciation of atmosphere or his subtle delicacy of handling, and unless both qualities had been present in full measure the results might have been terrible.

Simple realism is blended with just enough expressionist fantasy to clarify without jarring, and apart from one small error of taste, the many intimate and dangerous moments of the play were triumphantly negotiated. His huge company served him well. Miss Miriam Adams as Wendla portrayed a fresh innocence which never approached insipidity, Mr. W. E. C. Jenkins played Melchior with a strength and intensity contrasting with, yet complementing, the introspective hysteria of Mr. Leonard Sachs as Moritz. Other good performances were given by Miss Alice O'Day, Miss Jean Shepherd and Mr. Vincent Holman, and Mr. Charles Maunsell dominated the last scene with the sheer force of intonation. The production will be repeated on Sunday, May 10.

Stars Only

Morocco (at the Carlton) is a ridiculous film " inlaid for ornament " with three stars of the very first magnitude, Gary Cooper, Adolphe Menjou and the lovely Marlene Dietrich of *Blue Angel* fame. I suppose any film fan will go any distance to see such a constellation, however disappointing the universe in which they twinkle. There is a curious sort of spiritual measles in the theatrical world, which causes its denizens to catch the same subject from each other. Ever since the success of *Beau Geste* we have been flooded with films on that singularly boring theme of the Foreign Legion, a very disagreeable and ugly subject, though it is suitably sentimentalised and sugar coated in *Morocco*. There is very little outdoor photography in *Morocco*, which is the tale of Marlene Dietrich, a cabaret singer, torn between Adolphe Menjou, as an immensely high-minded millionaire, and the reckless legionnaire, Gary Cooper. It is painful to observe the great Menjou offering a chorus girl marriage straight off. Marlene Dietrich is still very beautiful, but she is absurdly over produced, and it is a mistake for her to imitate the troll-like diction of Greta Garbo. Gary Cooper, alone of the three principals, succeeded in getting a little personality into his part. In spite of his wretched material he was as charming as ever and introduced into his reckless insouciance a comic element which I had not observed before. There is a magnificent finale of the best Surreyside order, when Marlene Dietrich throws over her rich fiancé at the last moment, and in a magnificent Chanel gown pursues Gary Cooper's company across the desert! This trope reduced the audience to gigglement. As for poor Menjou, he is heard explaining, " Well, I don't mind. You see, I love her, and only care about her happiness." Would that life were as simple as this! *Morocco* is ridiculous as a story, devoid of interesting characters, and not very pretty as photography, but inevitably gains a sort of interest by reason of its distinguished cast, which will assure it a box-office success.

Walton's Viola Concerto

Although this work has not yet received a perfect performance, a third hearing confirms one's first impression that here is a quite outstanding piece of music in which a spontaneous and youthful spirit is expressed with a surprising maturity of technique. Such technical assurance is not usually obtained until a time when youthful enthusiasm is a little staled. This concerto is altogether a most encouraging piece of work. Its vitality and high spirits are completely devoid of any freakish quality, while its lyrical passages are equally free from any hint of the pastiche. We see the progress that Walton has made if we compare the beautiful coda of this work with the rather similar passage at the end of his earlier " Sinfonia Concertante."

There the reminiscences and combinations of previous themes, although skilfully done, were a technical device imposed on the music from outside, whereas the return of the opening theme at the end of the Viola Concerto is part, not only of the formal, but of the emotional, logic of the work. It is not too much to say that this coda is one of the finest and most moving pages in contemporary music. Technically speaking, the orchestration is the least satisfactory side of the work. It is skilful, but over-elaborate, and tends, as in other works by Walton, to obscure at times the firm structure of the music. Besides, as last Thursday's performance showed, it is by no means fool-proof. The brass was definitely poor, and M. Ansermet's beat was hardly flexible enough for the romantic nature of the music. Against this, though, we could put Mr. Lionel Tertis's exceptionally brilliant performance of the solo part. Mr. Tertis also played the rather thankless solo part in Berlioz's " Harold in Italy." This rarely-heard work is one of Berlioz's most enchanting scores, and has all the clarity and vivacity of Latin music at its best. It is a great pity that the varied and excellent programmes of the Royal Philharmonic Society have been so poorly attended.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, April 3rd—
Bach's St. John's Passion, St. Anne's, Soho, 4.
Bach's St. John's Passion, St. George's, Hanover Square, 6.30.

Saturday, April 4th—
" Autumn Crocus," Lyric Theatre.
" White Horse Inn," by Erik Charell, Coliseum.

Monday, April 6th—
" The King's Messenger," by Frederick Jackson, Royalty Theatre.
" Saint Joan," His Majesty's Theatre.
" The Romantic Young Lady," Embassy Theatre.
Motor Racing, Brooklands.
Agricultural Show, Dublin.

Tuesday, April 7th—
" The New Gossoon," by George Shiels, Apollo Theatre.
Ideal Homes Exhibition, Olympia.

Wednesday, April 8th—
" Five Farthings," by A. R. Rawlinson, Haymarket Theatre.

Thursday, April 9th—
" Black Coffee," by Agatha Christie, St. Martin's Theatre.
Golf. Professional Tournament, Rochampton.
Mr. Evelyn Wrench on " Finland," B.B.C.

Friday, April 10th—
Sir Walter Lawrence on " India and the Living Past," B.B.C.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHEN Dr. John Donne died three hundred years ago on the last day of March, he was fifty-seven years old, he had been in holy orders for fifteen years, and Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in London, for nine. His image still stands in Wren's church, as it stood in the church destroyed by the fire. There in stone, wrapped in his shroud, his burning eyes, in daily expectation of the death he so hated, are looking out at those who go to pay him honour. For many of us there are only three Deans of St. Paul's: Colet, Donne and Church; and of these by far the greatest is Donne. I have not heard whether his present successor, or the cathedral authorities, intend to honour John Donne at this his tercentenary. It would be a creditable act. But although we are told that the angels rejoice more over a sinner that repenteth, there is often a strange hesitancy on the part of churchmen to follow the angelic example. Donne is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance outside Spain of a man of high imagination and great intellectual gifts deciding that, after all, the Renaissance had not brought the age of faith to an end. Men may differ about the biographical element in Donne's poems; men will quarrel about his character, about the motives which drove him from a cultured indifference to so vehement a profession of religion, but no one familiar with his work can doubt that he was essentially a man of the Renaissance, an Englishman Italianate, quick to the sharp scents and the bright colours, and the high, piercing music of that glorious spring; nor that he abandoned them, as a man might abandon a light and gay music to return to the solemnity and severity of plain chant.

* * *

In spite of the growth in the popularity of Donne's poetry since Mr. Chambers' edition in the Muses Library thirty-five years ago, I doubt if the general reader is familiar with Donne's work as a whole, even if we exclude the sermons which few read save in selections. I notice that modern admirers tend to quote from the same poems that came into fresh fame at the end of last century. "Everyone knows" two or three satires, five or six elegies, and perhaps the hymn to God the Father. Of the sonnets and songs, "everyone knows" the bitter and the beautiful ones about love, the quaintness of "The Flea," or the fancy of "Go and catch a falling star." Equally familiar are those startling, stunning lines in which Donne so expressively uses the language of every day—"I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I Did ere we loved?"; "I am two fools, I know, For loving and for saying so"; "Why should we rise because 'tis light? Did we lie down because 'twas night?"; "Love, any devil else but you Would for a given soul give something too"; or, of a deceived and crippled husband, "Sits down and snorts, caged in his basket chair"; or that line which contains the half of Rupert Brooke's poetry, "For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love." These poems are read again and again, but comparatively few of Donne's admirers attempt the longer secular ones, or venture far into those poems of religion which would have gained him as great, if a narrower, reputation had the secular poems not been preserved.

* * *

There are some lines of Daniel's quoted by Coleridge in *The Friend*, lines which answer, perhaps more confidently than Donne's would have, the question which had begun to plague the more inquisitive spirits of the Renaissance—the question what was the position of Man in the universe that was proving to be so much wider and obscurer and wonderful than their grandfathers had dreamed.

> Knowing the heart of man is set to be
> The centre of the world, about the which
> These revolutions of disturbances
> Still roll; where all the aspects of misery
> Predominate; whose strong effects are such,
> As he must bear, being powerless to redress;
> And that unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!

The English Renaissance was an age of scepticism. Donne, who was all his life a man of wide reading, shared that new sceptical spirit. We find in his poems and his sermons references to the new discoveries of his age; and in both we are aware of his zest for metaphysical speculation. Now no man can for long indulge in metaphysics without finding himself confronted by the problem of personality; and it is this which fascinates and maddens John Donne. For instance, he questions in "The Paradox" whether love does not destroy a man so completely that there is left no "I" to lament destruction.

> No Lover saith, I love, nor any other
> Can judge a perfect lover;
> He thinks that else none can, nor will agree
> That any loves but he:
> I cannot say I lov'd, for who can say
> He was kill'd yesterday?
> Love with excess of heat, more young than old,
> Death kills with too much cold;
> We die but once, and who lov'd last did die,
> He that saith twice, doth lie:
> For though he seem to move, and stir a while,
> It doth the sense beguile.
> Such life is like the light which bideth yet
> When the light's life is set,
> Or like the heat, which fire in solid matter
> Leaves behind, two hours after.
> Once I loved and died; and am now become
> Mine Epitaph and Tomb,
> Here dead men speak their last, and so do I;
> Love-slain, lo, here I lie.

He does, that is, say he was "kill'd yesterday"; and perhaps we may find the reason for Donne's conversion in that strong conviction of the truth of his own reality. He agrees with Daniel that man's heart remains "the centre of the world"; and if that be so, and the world be what it is now, no longer an order, but a disorder, no longer a pattern, but a shattered and scattered mirror, then man, especially the proud man, must "erect himself above himself."

* * *

It is this conviction which he expressed in the elegies on Elizabeth Drury, elegies condemned (and pardonably) for their extravagance, but evidently springing from a deep realisation that in a sick world man still had the task of pursuing and purchasing health, though Donne could not resist the delight of emphasising the horrors, the crookednesses and disorders of the world. He is like Huysmans, if less morbid; and in the end he achieved a conquest like the Flemish decadents. In one poem he recalls the sanity of the Shakespeare who wrote that great sonnet on the conquest of death, with its tremendous last line, "And death once dead there's no more dying then." Here is Donne's on the same subject:

> Death be not proud, though some have called thee
> Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,
> For those, whom thou thinkest thou dost overthrow,
> Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
> From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
> Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
> And soonest our best men with thee do go,
> Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
> Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings and desperate men
> And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
> And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
> And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
> One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
> And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

RICHARD SUNNE.

THE SHADE OF SHERIDAN

Sheridan: a Ghost Story. By E. M. BUTLER. Constable. 15s.

"Biography," says Miss Butler, "is the literary expression of a personal experience, the contact of a conscious and an unconscious mind." She takes it to be her task, as the writer of a man's life, to re-create in literary form a living mind and personality; but this reincarnation will not be a mere likeness of the man at any moment of his life; it is the picture of him forced on the imagination of a competent biographer by the cumulative effect of a study of the known facts of his life, his extant works, his letters and papers, his age and circle, and the recorded impressions of contemporaries. Thus, when she wrote *The Tempestuous Prince*, a life of the almost forgotten Pückler-Muskau, she explored a personality which revealed itself to her as rogue, rover, rake, hero, writer and Titan, a most substantial human being of inordinate passions and preposterous vanities, with a character inseparable from flesh and blood.

She now turns, in the same biographical spirit, to a man of whom we thought we knew a good deal—Sheridan, the playwright, the orator, the wit—and sets out to re-create his personality. She pursues him through dark corridors among the pages of his previous biographers, and sees him disappearing round corners. She catches a glimpse of his "brilliant, beautiful eyes," and hurries after him—but too late, he is gone. Through two-thirds of her book she follows eagerly and systematically, but he has vanished into thin air. He is no more than a ghost. In effect, for the purposes of a biographer—for such a biographer as Miss Butler cares to be—he does not exist. Sheridan is dead. Was he ever alive?

It should be said at once it is the ghost story which interests us in this book, not the inconsequent little biography which follows—or rather, not perhaps entirely inconsequent, for, having so effectually scared herself, the author was hardly likely to arrive cool and collected at the substance behind her aery spirit. The book is really the story of Miss Butler's experience when she is in contact with the material of her biography. It is certainly a remarkable experience, arising out of significant facts. First, there are all the other biographies and memoirs, and there are a good many of them. Some of the writers were quite able people, and included Tom Moore, Mrs. Oliphant, and Walter Sichel. All of them, according to Miss Butler, however laborious their efforts, failed to get anywhere near Sheridan the man. Moore "groaned audibly in his *Journal* over his 'Sheridan task,' and ascribed this attitude to lack of matter." All were "either bored, or angry, or both." "The positively paralyzing effect of the accumulated lassitude of the authors and the lifelessness of their books has to be reckoned with to-day. It is a grave factor in Sheridan's posthumous life."

So Miss Butler leaves his biographers for his contemporaries, and the "magic circle" in which he lived. We quickly begin to get rather uneasy, for Sheridan is at his vanishing tricks again. All the memoirists and correspondents speak of his fascination and his wit, but the specimens of his wit are not dazzling, and we are not told in what his fascination consisted. "There is no mysterious silence maintained about him; nor are the particulars, allusions and descriptions baffling in themselves. Nothing as dramatic as that. The references are fairly numerous and often quite detailed, but vaguely uninteresting, uninspiring and flat."

The letters, for Miss Butler's purpose, are equally elusive. They seem to have been "dashed off at the dictates of grim necessity," and reveal only a man "so hustled and harried, as to be unable to express anything beyond that fact." His speeches in Parliament, declared to be the most brilliant feats of English oratory, are either entirely lost, or preserved in scraps of "cold print, disfigured too often by misrenderings, shrivelled by contractions, maimed by numerous omissions, benumbed by the use of the third person." Even his recorded jests and *bon mots* leave the biographer cold. We know that he could perpetrate any impudence under the glamour of his gaiety, and that he could wangle money from his creditors by a timely jest—but what were his jests and his gay remarks? A company of his friends could listen to him spell-bound throughout an evening, and yet have nothing to record the next morning but that he was brilliant. (The wine, of course, circulated freely). No doubt "Sheridan *was* a wit," says the despairing author, but "the squibs, the rockets, the catherine-wheels obscure the figure behind."

And there, if Miss Butler had been wise, she would have left the matter. She has been through all the biographical material, contemporary and posthumous, and has discovered that whatever Sheridan may have been, he no longer *is*; he is a myth, a spectre; as a substance, inexhumable. And then she remembers Hans Andersen and the fir-tree in the forest, whose darling wish to become a Christmas tree was fulfilled. "His triumph was due to the candles, the tinsel, the crackers and the stars." So she begins all over again, and gives us a life—a very, very short one—of her fir-tree who was destined to be thrown into the darkest corner of an attic. She gives us, after all, Sheridan the schoolboy, the chivalrous lover, the brilliant author of *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic*, the Member of Parliament and orator, Sheridan living on tick, in his cups, restless, unsettled, careless of his talent.

Is she, as biographer, bored or angry? One feels that she has evaded boredom by a ruse. For a chronicler anxious to give a social picture of his time Sheridan would be an admirable peg. But Miss Butler is the kind of biographer who requires a soul to dissect, or at least some curious temperament with which the psychologist may make subtle play. But Sheridan, even as a dramatist, is but a moment's entertainment—incomparable light comedy, no doubt, the most delicate of delicate fun, pleasing, soothing, gratifying, so long as we are content never to wish to press above or below the surface values of social life. If we would do more—and Miss Butler is not content with so little—then Sheridan's comedy is just champagne, which will go flat if you leave it too long; and Sheridan himself may seem no more than froth—no suitable material for the analyst. Miss Butler has evaded boredom by cutting down her biography to the length of an essay, and devoting the rest of her book to a fascinating account of the boredom she would have felt if she had done anything else.

"Bored, or angry." Is she, like the other biographers, angry? She has drowned her anger in sorrow. She is sorry for this ghost whom she tries to bring back to life because, "being an artist to the tips of his fastidious fingers," he failed to shun "violent contact with the world." She is sorry for him because he took up business, entered politics, made speeches, became a bon viveur, a talker and a hopeless drunkard; and she is especially sorry for all those distracting things because he "was intended . . . to interpret the life of his age for posterity in terms of undying art." But was he? What conceivable evidence has Miss Butler for this? The spectre is beginning to swell to fantastic proportions.

But though this book is not to be regarded as a biography of Sheridan, and though the conclusion is not quite satisfactory, Miss Butler has that rare approach to a subject which cannot fail to enrich it. She is not easily to be imposed on. She gets rid of nonsense. She has ingenuity, humour, and penetration, and has found a most interesting way of explaining why she is not really very interested in her subject.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES.

A TALE PARTLY TOLD

The Memoirs of Marshal Foch. Heinemann. 25s.

A book with this title might well have taken rank among the few great masterpieces which illumine the art of war. For Foch was a notable writer and theorist, before ever his fighting days began. Starting with the mind which produced his *Principles of War*, and superimposing on it the experiences of 1914–18, in which few leaders on either side took so varied a part, what a wonderful body of facts and comments he might have bequeathed to posterity! But these *Memoirs* are not at all like that. And perhaps that is the first thing to be said (quite frankly) about them.

It was as long ago as 1920 that Foch decided "to write his reminiscences of the War." He directed his staff to collect documents and draw up "a strictly objective recital" of his various operations. This material he went over, and converted into a personal memoir for two periods only—1914 and 1918. The rest of his campaigns, notably those in Artois in 1915 (with the bloody fighting at Souchez, the "Labyrinth," etc.) and that which constituted the French participation in the Battle of the Somme, he failed to cover. The lacuna is here filled in by his editors—briefly, and not too well. What, then, of 1914 and 1918? The basis, we have seen, is a military narrative drawn up for him. He worked over this material, of course, but the 1918 portion is the only one into which he infused much personality and colour. The 1914 narrative is not at all satisfactory. Its account of the events is often surprisingly misleading, and it lapses occasionally into even more surprising inaccuracies. To anyone who is fairly well up in the facts, as

they have been elucidated by French, German and British records now generally available, its pages will impart nothing; while anyone lacking that familiarity might easily be led astray by them. British readers will see this most obviously in regard to the first battle of Ypres. But to keep clear of inter-Allied controversy, let us instance the battle of Morhanges, in which Foch commanded the XX. Corps. Morhanges was one of the worst blunders and bloodiest defeats in the War. The French offensive in Lorraine, to which it put an end, could, for reasons which Foch himself makes clear, serve no large purpose. It meant simply pushing troops into a death-trap; and was wholly unnecessary for defending the French side, since that too was a death-trap, where the Germans never made headway. Moreover, by its diversion and waste of French troops, who were terribly needed in the areas of real strategical importance further north, it came near to losing the whole War. It can be explained by nothing but the insensate belief in "the offensive at all costs," which Foch himself had done so much to propagate. You might have thought that he would have taken in retrospect here some measure of the tragedy and of the far-reaching rectifications of military theory and practice which it compelled. But no; there is a formal military account of advances, standstills, and retreats day by day; and the reader who follows the XX. Corps back to France is left with the impression that there had been a fine though unsuccessful performance, which brilliantly bore out the doctrine of the offensive.

In this earlier period Foch's comments are mostly technical, and only occasionally of wide interest. Here is one which certainly is so—his statement to whom is due the credit for the victory of the Marne:

> The Battle of the Marne was undoubtedly a great victory. It was the work of the man who as early as August 24th had begun to plan and who carried it through to the end, the Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre.

Occasionally, too, there are interesting personal characterisations. On October 17th, 1914, he first met Mr. Lloyd George:

> The first impression that he gave me was that of a man of rare vivacity and a most uncommon quickness of mind; this impression was strengthened and prolonged by the breadth of his views, the diversity of the subjects he discussed, and the fertility of the solutions he advanced.

Exactly a fortnight later he met Kitchener:

> He accosted me with the words: "Well, so we are beaten!" I answered that we were not, and that I greatly hoped we would not be. I then related in detail the events of the last three days, which had brought such heavy losses to the Allied Armies. In finishing I asked him to send us reinforcements as soon as possible. On that first day of November, 1914, when each day seemed as long as a month, Lord Kitchener replied as follows:
>
> "On July 1st, 1915, you will have one million trained English soldiers in France. Before that date you will get none, or practically none."
>
> "We do not ask so many, but we would like to have them sooner—indeed at once," we all cried as if in preconcerted union.
>
> "Before that date, do not count on anything," was all he vouchsafed to reply . . . .
>
> During my conversation with Lord Kitchener I was struck by the accuracy of his conceptions in what concerned the war, which he already saw would last a very long time.

Two reflections suggest themselves on this. First, that Foch's comment seems to be wisdom after the event; since he and his French colleagues did not then share Kitchener's long view. But secondly, that Kitchener himself was a year out, since it was not till July 1st, 1916, in the Battle of the Somme, that the British Army could take part in the Western struggle on the sort of scale he had foretold. The year's delay was in part the price paid for the Gallipoli campaign, then unforeseen, and in part resulted from the vast expansion of the need for munitions, which was also unforeseen at that time.

The 1918 narrative is a much more vivid piece of work, with strong human as well as military interest. One sees the generalissimo appointed at a very dark hour to "co-ordinate" the action of national commanders, who were straining apart under the weight of quite different preoccupations. Broadly speaking, in March, 1918, the dominant French anxiety was to save Paris, the dominant British one to save the Channel ports; and if the retreats of the two main Allies had conformed to these influences, the German aim of driving a geographical wedge between them would have been realised. It very nearly was. Pétain was actually on the point of giving orders, which would have had that effect, when Foch, knowing it, sent his first suggestion to Clemenceau about "an organ to direct the War." It was Haig who suggested Foch himself for the task; and though Foch had his subsequent difficulties with both of them, it is clear that Pétain was the less amenable. Indeed by June 17th his obstruction had become so troublesome that Foch had to obtain from the French Government an express decision, that "the clause in the Beauvais Agreement giving Commanders-in-Chief the right to appeal to their Governments would no longer apply to the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army." Besides the French, British, Americans, and Belgians, his co-ordination came eventually to include the Italians also; and it was not always made easier by the impatiences of the fiery old Clemenceau, to whom no one else seemed zealous enough, and who nearly picked serious quarrels, now with the Italians, now with the Americans. Indeed, one of the few "revelations" in the book is a long letter written by Clemenceau in October, 1918, after the American repulses in the Argonne, in which he urged Foch to ask the American Government to recall Pershing. Foch very wisely took quite other steps.

The sustained crescendo of Foch's authority and the Allied victories through the War's last six months forms a fine climax for the book. But not a few readers may find even more interest in two documents which occur at the beginning of the volume. One is an admirable autobiography by Foch himself sketching in eighteen really racy pages his career from his birth in 1851 down to July, 1914, and describing with particular zest the great French military schools, at which he was first pupil, and later teacher or commandant. The other is a bundle of vivid reminiscences by the translator, Colonel T. Bentley Mott, who served as American liaison officer at Foch's headquarters. He tells us that Foch was "a kindly man" but "not gentle"; that he insisted on being always quartered in a house with "steam heat," and worked in an atmosphere of 80 degrees, "stifling even to an American"; and that every morning he walked to the village church to say his prayers. He depicts by striking examples the Marshal's brusque metaphorical way of parrying in conversation or discussion; and still more strikingly attests the extraordinary mental harmony—which grew almost to a fusion of personality—between him and his chief of staff, General Weygand.

R. C. K. ENSOR.

TRAVELLER'S TROVE

A Journey to China, or Things Which Are Seen. By Arnold J. Toynbee. Constable. 15s.

These impressions of six months' zig-zag travelling round the Old World are written fragmentarily, mostly *en voyage*, for different English and American newspapers and periodicals; and one can pay no higher compliment to the quality of Professor Toynbee's writing than by saying that they convey in a very remarkable degree an essential sense of consistency and continuity. The explanation, of course, is that the author is no ordinary traveller. These are first-hand impressions, fresh minted, of "things seen" which were largely unfamiliar to his eyes; but they were not unfamiliar to his mind's eye, and his impressions of them are minted by a mind so rich in the lore of international culture that they are all of one texture, woven of a rare combination of eye and imagination.

The result is a most stimulating and suggestive book, as racy as it is scholarly. Professor Toynbee brings not only a richly stored mind and a receptive eye, but also an enormous zest to his record of a journey which, indeed, makes any would-be traveller's mouth water. His object was to attend the third biennial conference of the Institute of Pacific Relation at Kyote, the ancient capital of Japan, in November, 1929. His route was unusual. He went by road from London to Constantinople. He revisited Angora, and crossed the Syrian Desert from Damascus to Baghdad, following the overland route as far as Basra. India lured him for a flying visit from Karachi to Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Ahmedabad. Re-embarking at Bombay, he called at Colombo, Penang and Hong-Kong on his way to Shanghai. Thence he zig-zagged about Japan, North-East China, and Manchuria, and finally came home from Vladivostok by the Trans-Siberian Railway, stopping briefly at Moscow *en route*.

Professor Toynbee's impressions of this journey are so full of good things that any selection must be almost at random. One would like to linger with him in Europe and sympathise with his Customs tribulations in getting into Turkey; but the symbolical trees of Angora beckon one ahead—those multitudes of trees which the Turks are planting in and around their new Anatolian capital and nursing through their infancy. Trees, it is said, will not grow in this wilderness; but the Turks are bent on making them

grow, and this demands just that assiduous, laborious kind of work which they have hitherto been deemed incapable of performing. Professor Toynbee sees these trees as a symbol that the Turks have undergone a profound and perhaps lasting spiritual change, and, seized by the impulse to create, have transformed themselves from conquerors into pioneers. One would like to stress, too, the subtlety of Professor Toynbee's warning that the British remain on good terms with the Iraqis only on the implicit condition that they are soon going to leave the country, and seek to probe the precise significance of his distinction between the Moslem world—"in the name of all our Western prophets and apostles and martyrs of liberty . . . demanding liberty from—ourselves"—and the Indian struggle which is "not a conflict between Indian and Englishman, but a war in the Indian's own soul between two civilisations." But the Farther East is calling, and Professor Toynbee—never dotting his "i's" or crossing his "t's," but merely summing up a situation in a few suggestive phrases that feed the reader's imagination—whisks us away to China. We encounter her, however, long before we get to China proper: in Malay, where "the chief monument of the British Empire there may be the creation of a nineteenth Chinese province—and a very creditable monument it would be." Professor Toynbee emphasises the importance of the fact that China is expanding simultaneously into the East Indies on one front and into Eastern Siberia on the other; "and the winning of Manchuria by the Chinese pioneers in this twentieth century is the nearest thing—in romance and in scale and in economic consequences and in importance for the rest of the world—to that great expansion of the American people which has made the United States what it is to-day."

Very suggestive is his stressing of the point that the difference in scale between a country like China, which has never ceased to expand since she first came into the light of history, and a country like Turkey really amounts to a difference in kind, despite the similarities which he notes. Each chose as capitals two cities, Nanking and Angora, where "the revolutionary present is asserting itself against the traditional past," and the fact that both, Westernising themselves only when desperate circumstances practically forced the process upon them, were then "seized with a kind of revolutionary furore which has startled and intrigued the rest of the world largely because it presents so sharp a contrast to the traditional Turkish and Chinese temper of mind." One could wish for greater space to quote his comments on Russia—that country which, imposing a religion of the State in the name of liberation from the yoke of Religion, reveals itself in his eyes as utterly lacking in a sense of humour; but "just suppose that the Five-Year Plan were to materialise. Which of us would have the last laugh then?" But even then one would have barely hinted at the wealth of shrewd and penetrating observation in this book, not to speak of its charming asides on the philosophy of travel and its amusing "travellers' tales."

GREEK AND GREEK

First Athenian Memories. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. Cassell. 7s. 6d.

The Allied Secret Service in Greece. By SIR BASIL THOMSON. Hutchinson. £1 1s.

The coincidence of these two books in the same week has its humours. Sir Basil Thomson, assuming a censorious impartiality, dismisses Mr. Mackenzie's arduous labours in his capacity of Intelligence Officer as "vaudeville antics." Simultaneously, it is precisely this vaudeville theme that Mr. Mackenzie sets out to develop. Underneath, the purpose of both authors is the same—to record the technique and outcome of Allied diplomacy in Greece during the War. In method and outlook, however, they differ. Sir Basil Thomson, posing as a detached historian, displays a partisanship for King Constantine impervious to fact or reason; Mr. Mackenzie, dealing in personalities and personal experiences, remains a Venizelist in retrospect as at the time and paints the King as a typical royal mediocrity caught in an impossible position. He also remembers that we were anxious to win the War—a fact which has escaped Sir Basil. All the more significant is it, therefore, that historically each book should leave the same impression: namely, that our part in the Allied behaviour to Greece from 1915 to 1923 constitutes without exception the most disreputable incident in our national career since the Jameson Raid. "Had the British Government," writes Mr. Mackenzie, "been illuminated by even a glimmering of a notion of what it wanted in the Balkans that notion could have been carried out." And elsewhere:

> I have written policy; but the behaviour of Great Britain in allowing herself unwillingly to be dragged along by the French like a child being taken to the dentist can hardly be dignified by a name of such positive significance. There was an opportunity to go forward in full co-operation with France. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to build up a strong Greece with King Constantine. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to build up a strong Greece with M. Venizelos alone. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to make Great Britain mistress of the Levant. It was not accepted.

Unfortunately, this first instalment of Mr. Mackenzie's Athenian memories is carried only as far as the end of the year 1915. Sir Basil Thomson is more concerned with the events of the following year. The villain of his piece is Commander de Roquefeuil, whose ruthless and mendacious propaganda found its way into the French and English press and stirred up Allied public opinion to countenance the landing of December 1st, 1916, and the subsequent deposition of King Constantine. The French were the chief criminals; as to that there can be no dispute. But Mr. Mackenzie says: "I find myself hardening in the opinion that for the follies which have been charged to Sarrail and de Roquefeuil the British Government must be held primarily responsible." This opinion will no doubt receive confirmation in his ensuing volumes.

Sir Basil Thomson's thesis is the violation, moral and actual, of Greek neutrality by the Allies—a violation which lacked any shadow of justification and was so conducted as to render the German affront to Belgium an act of straightforward honesty by comparison. The justice of this thesis may be evident; but Sir Basil Thomson's presentation of it is sometimes unnecessarily weak. If his documentation is extensive, so are his omissions. He puts no case for the other side. To him, Venizelos is still the rebel; of the rebel's greatness, of his inspired faith in the Allies' ultimate success, and his desire that Greece should profit thereby, he has neither knowledge nor understanding. But his book serves a useful purpose. For until amends can be made and the full details be recorded by an authoritative historian, it is just as well that our sins should be occasionally recalled.

What part Sir Basil Thomson may have played in the events he describes does not appear. In Mr. Mackenzie's book the author's part is the main theme. "I fancied," he says, "when I set out to write down these memories that I had achieved the necessary detachment; but from the past rises the old exasperation . . . ." "I could not bear them, and I cannot bear now to hear Greece criticised. The truth is we fall in love with these Balkan countries and become hypersensitive about them." This at least is honest, and an honest view results. The historical chapters are lucid and substantially accurate. But these are

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intended only as a background to the immediate colour of the author's days, of his well-beloved Greece, and of the multitude of extraordinary creatures, from greasy Levantine spies to ministers and plenipotentiaries, with whom his work brought him in contact. A superb procession of comic figures struts through the pages: "I can see M. Guillemin now standing on the steps of the British Legation in a frock coat much too large for him and shouting away at his *cher collègue*, the British Minister, who, lean and grey, would be eyeing him rather in the way a heron might eye a stranded salmon." That unique humour with which the British Foreign Office conducts its business is enshrined in a permanent memorial. Yet the book is not all funny. The pathetic picture of whitehaired Lisa suddenly confronted by the Archbishop to whom, long ago, she had given her first youth and beauty, reveals the true artist. It is as an artist, not as an historian or a spy, that Mr. Mackenzie writes. At the same time, he knows that if his memories are to achieve appropriate reality, the historical morals must be drawn.

Judged thus, as literature, and as the best War literature yet produced, the present volume falls short of its predecessor. The latter, which dealt with the Dardanelles, maintained the balance between the personal and the comic against the background of a single battle. Now the background has been enlarged to the whole field of European diplomacy. In reaction, the personalities are longer, the reminiscences of other times more irrelevant. Alma Mater Magdalensis, the curse of Mr. Mackenzie's literary career, makes incessant reappearance. The picture is confused. Perhaps this is only a temporary impression. For there are three more volumes to come. Mr. Mackenzie admits that their scope has widened beyond his expectations. He has changed his brushes to suit a larger canvas, and we must await its completion to judge the effect.

In one supremely dramatic quality, however, the two books are united—in the depiction of war against the loveliest background that the earth can show. "Mountains, sea, and Attic plain were spread before me in an atmosphere so crystalline and so jealous of perfect form that when I first came back to Southern Italy from Greece I was amazed at the softness of a blue sky I had once considered fervid, at the milkiness of an air I had once fancied clear." Landscape-passages such as this bring cohesion to the eternal comedy of humanity and the unfolding misery of events. Mr. Mackenzie has not lost faith in the world, in its beauty and its amusement.

THE LION AND THE UNICORN

The Englishman. By W. MACNEILE DIXON. Arnold. 6s.
London at Home. By M. V. HUGHES. Dent. 6s.

Professor Santayana wrote in the course of his *Soliloquies in England*: "As the Lion obviously represents the British character, so the Unicorn somewhat more subtly expresses the British intellect." And Mr. Dixon, who quotes Santayana as one of our most sympathetic critics, believes, too, that the lion beats the unicorn all round the town. A strange lion it is, roaring at times like Hotspur, at times with the deep bray of Falstaff: both equally frightening to the unicorn, and both, one may add, a good deal more heroic than the fact. Mr. Dixon leans more towards the lion than to our other emblem, the lady with the trident. In the end he leaves him, a rather worried and doubtful lion, with the criticisms of Emerson and Voltaire still ringing about his ears.

Mr. Dixon sets out to praise, but he more than states the other side of the case. Englishmen have been called at different times mad, hypocritical, stupid, marauders, sentimentalists. Foreigners usually have a very definite opinion about the English character, and putting these opinions together in order to test and if necessary refute them, Mr. Dixon has decided that our character must be far more complex than we generally suppose. He looks for the origins of this complexity in our mixed ancestry and our place on the map, and sets our conflicting elements side by side—Paganism and Christianity, common sense and sentimentalism, poetry and a lack of imagination. He does not attempt a generalised picture of the Englishman, but the outlines of one emerge from his book. The Englishman is an amateur, an individualist, a doubter before life; a humorist, not a wit; he believes in being dutiful, and in being English; he does not assert his superiority to the rest of the world, but tacitly assumes that they are aware of it. He very successfully acquires what Henry James has called "the habit of sinking the profession instead of advertising it; the general diffusion of the air of the gentleman." Mr. Dixon's conclusion, then, is a gentlemanly lion—and round the corner, vigorous and running, that much stranger gentleman, the unicorn. The burden of Mr. Dixon's book, which is sympathetic and agreeably written, and is wide enough to contain chapters on Shakespeare and the English Bible, is that too many people have forgotten the unicorn.

Mrs. Hughes in *London at Home* gives some amusing examples of our national character. She keeps an ear open for conversations in 'buses and teashops; her book is lively gossip, and it makes a good unofficial perambulation of London. The astonished foreigner who reads it will learn that a man who travelled regularly on the Southern Railway sent the following letter to the local stationmaster:

> Sir,—Kindly give this postcard to the three gentlemen who travel on the 9.12 a.m. to Cannon Street, in the last carriage, to whom I wish to convey holiday greetings. I travel daily with these gentlemen but have neither their names nor addresses. Many thanks.

Surely behind the gravity of that one catches a glimpse of the arched nostril.

SHORTER NOTICES

My Greatest Adventure. By MALCOLM CAMPBELL. Thornton Butterworth. 6s.

This short, swift-moving, readable book is extraordinarily interesting not only as an adventurous account of a wild goose chase in pursuit of hidden wealth, but even more as a study in the psychology of a famous racing motorist. We are apt to imagine such a man as necessarily as swift, keen, and logical as the machine he drives, and it comes as a shock to find him romantic to a degree, not a little superstitious, and in general capable of believing almost anything. He believes in treasure on Cocos Island much more from hope than knowledge; a "more than likely" and "is supposed to have been secreted" become in the course of a few pages "historically . . . authentic enough." He believes that descendants of the Incas are still alive on Cocos—because a spiritualist told him so and his dog barked at midnight. Indeed, so complete is his credulity that after a while one begins to reflect uneasily upon the odd coincidence that the actual clues (which proved useless in practice) only turned up after he had made up his mind that he wanted to go to Cocos.

We Indians. Being the recollections of Big Chief White Horse Eagle as told to EDGAR VON SCHMIDT-PAULI. Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d.

White Horse Eagle had an exciting life of 108 years. He was brought up as a chief's son on the plains remote from white civilisation, fought both Indians and "Palefaces," reared William Cody—the real "Buffalo Bill"—in his wigwam, and has met, among other celebrities, Brigham Young, Lincoln, and Queen Victoria. The interest of the book lies in its evidently authentic account from the Indian point of view first of native life in the earlier days of freedom and warfare, and then of the final subjection of the Indians in the years following the Civil War, in its details a scandal second to no other outrage committed by a "superior" race on an "inferior." In general his story seems to fit the known facts, but a notable exception is the vivid account of the surrounding and slaughter of Custer's "five thousand" men—more generally accepted authorities set the figure at 245!

Prometheus and Epimetheus. By CARL SPITTELER. Trans. by JAMES F. MUIRHEAD. Jarrolds. 7s. 6d.

One can only surmise that this "prose epic," the first considerable literary production of the late Carl Spitteler, possessed in the original German some more vigorous quality than appears in this translation, the conventional lifeless language of which renders it all but unreadable. "And" (half the paragraphs in the book commence with the word "and") "as she bent herself over the face of the child, her eyes became moist, and when the baby smiled and playfully touched her eyes and nose with its dimpled hands, she felt an ecstasy of mother-love and passionately pressed a thousand kisses on its lips." Its elaborate symbolism, with its worms who behave like "true and loyal guests," its dogs that blush and sob, its lions that sigh "because of the intensity of their inner sensitiveness," and so forth—all, of course, of the highest allegorical significance—is not of a type to appeal to English minds unless invested with a spontaneity of invention and freshness of detail not apparent here. Prometheus may be a prophecy of the modern soul, but even that cannot make him interesting.

Puritan's Progress. By ARTHUR TRAIN. Scribner's. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Train is descended on both sides of his family from old New England stock. In this book he tells how he became curious about the Puritan background to his own bright modernity, and began investigating his family history, and also that of his country. The book is a combination of amusing anecdotes and embarrassingly puerile ob-

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servations. When Mr. Train attempts to think, the reader has a sense of shame at watching anything so unsuccessful. But when Mr. Train is content to record the miscellaneous absurdities he has culled from history, we are treated to such pleasing items as the story of a man who ordered a bath-tub in August and refused to take delivery of it in October "on the ground that, time being of the essence of the contract, he no longer had any use for the article, 'since the bathing season was over.'" Or again: "It (the Bible) has continued to be the basis of much of our legislation, even to the extent of a recent abortive effort on the part of a Western legislature to give it new vitality through a bill making it a crime to violate any of the Ten Commandments, and beginning: 'Whoso shall have another God shall be fined one hundred dollars.'" It is a sign of the world-slump when gods can be had for a quarter the price of a Ford car.

* * *

There was an error last week in the list of new and forthcoming fiction. *The Seventh Immortal*, by F. Holland Davis, should read *The Ninth Immortal*, by F. Hadland Davis. The publishers are the Scholartis Press.

About Motoring

THE JUSTIFICATIONS OF CAR OWNERSHIP

WHY do the vast majority of us either own cars or intend to own cars at the first possible opportunity? It is beside the point to say that the modern world imposes on us the necessity for fast travel over tolerable distances. If ninety per cent. of our car owners relinquished the hobby to-morrow, they would remain just as mobile as they are at present, and would spend less money on transport. The village resident may save time and money by owning a car. The urban dweller can accomplish nearly all his journeyings in less time and at far less cost by public transport services. When a rare emergency makes separate transport essential, he can always hire a fast car; and on such a basis his transport costs will show very appreciable reductions as compared with car ownership. Incidentally, the man who relies on public transport will normally travel at less risk and with less anxiety than the man who drives his own vehicle.

Deep-rooted instincts are actually responsible for the motoring craze. Primitive man relished a modicum of privacy—his own cave, with his own woman, and his own hunting ground. He tolerated his connection with a tribe partly because it was inevitable, partly from fear, because numbers often implied safety. His instinct of privacy still survives in us, and is very largely thwarted by city life. We gratify it by motoring. The car wafts us away from our neighbours and our business associates and our maids to places where nobody knows us, and where within limits nobody minds very much what we do or what we wear. Primitive man liked to be his own master. If he were not the muscular bully who ruled the tribe, he wished that he could be; and resented the scowls and blows and humiliations which he had to accept from the more powerful males or male of the tribe. We also yearn to be independent and masterful. Most of us are subordinate to somebody in our profession—probably to a number of somebodies; we are subordinate to other people in social importance when we go home in the evening; we are always subordinate to the law of the land and to public opinion, if only to the public opinion of a freak minority with whom we specially associate ourselves. But at the wheel of a car we are free and masterful as soon as we have swung clear of the road in which we live. The other passengers are subordinate to us. We stop when we wish, for as long as we like. At our hotels everybody is speciously servile. We enjoy an illusion of kingship.

* * *

Wanderlust in nomadic races of old is usually ascribed to the pressure of some sheer utilitarian necessity. But it goes deeper than that. Many men and some women rapidly tire of surroundings and occupations which have become familiar. And these restless souls possess marked and obvious affinities with savage and prehistoric man. This element bulks large in the composition of many a motorist. He has exhausted the possibilities of the familiar. Neighbours, books, garden, hobbies weary him. He yearns to be up and away. Life denies him the chance to be up and away in the large sense. He cannot escape the familiar by migrating to Tierra del Fuego, because he does not really wish to abandon the amenities of civilisation, or to desert his wife and children, or to become a penniless wanderer. But these yearnings are present rather than pronounced. And he can calm them for a week by departing on Saturday afternoon to the Dorset coast, returning somewhat reluctantly on Sunday evening. Two or three times a year the wanderlust becomes rather more violent. So at Easter and in August he will pack his suitcases, and depart on tour. He will revel in the sensations of the first few days, consider that he has escaped from civilisation, and wish that no necessity lay upon him to return in ten days or in four weeks, as the case may be. But during this period of escape his wanderlust will weaken, because he is really a victim of civilisation. He will increasingly resent certain elements in the temporary racket; the discomfort of consorting continuously with his two or three companions or with strangers; the financial aspects of the tour; occasional failures to find satisfying entertainment when he is not actually driving; and the like. And anon the wanderlust, weakened by a long string of sedentary ancestors, will be more than sated, and he will be rejoiced to return home. Wanderlust will not subsequently trouble him till the pressures of a sedentary life once more become acute.

* * *

In some men there is a dormant engineer. They may be bank clerks or chemists or insurance brokers by profession. But like prehistoric toolmaking, raftbuilding, hut-designing man they are happiest when they are tinkering with something. Such men will snatch at any chance which our world offers of making things. They are inveterate constructors of radio sets; and if they can afford a car, they buy one, drive it themselves and in their leisure hours are perpetually adjusting and tuning and cleaning it. But they are a minority; for the average Briton would have a chauffeur if he could afford the wages.

Sensations of motion stir yet another primæval instinct. In their simplest form they are savoured by running, diving and swimming. In their most acute form they are granted only to the pilot of a fighting scout aeroplane. But the motor car offers a milder version; and quite sedate drivers of quite slow cars will occasionally play the fool by skidding their corners, or jumping the car at speed over a donkey-back bridge to the great annoyance of their wives.

Of course, no motorist ever confesses to any of these instincts. He rationalises that which in reality is a blind submission to a primitive instinct. He rationalises it so successfully that he eventually comes to believe that the ownership of a car is essential to his existence. And anon like the capercailzie he surrenders to the display instinct, and purchases a far more expensive car than his income justifies, a car which, except for purposes of ostentation, is not more useful to him in actual fact than a rival vehicle at a half or even at a tenth the price.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

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PLAYTIME

BRIDGE

BY CALIBAN.

HONOUR-TRICK VALUATION OF THE HAND.

IT is necessary, for several purposes, to find out what one's hand is worth in terms of Honour-tricks. These provide the *defensive basis* without which sound bidding is impossible, especially in the following situations:

(1) The making of an original bid.
(2) The valuation of one's hand in support of partner's bid.
(3) "Forcing" bids, whether original or take-out.
(4) The use of the "Rule of Eight" where game and slam bids are in question.

The "Rule of Eight," of which more hereafter, has reference to the fact that *the aggregate Honour-trick valuation of all four hands is normally* 8 *or thereabouts.*

The following is the "Standard Table of Honour-tricks," as devised by Mr. Ely Culbertson:

AK of a suit count as	2 tricks
AQ, AJ10, KQ10 of a suit count as	1½ „
A, KQ, KJx of a suit count as	1 trick
Kx and Qx in different suits count as ..	
Kx, QJx of a suit count as	½ „
Qx and Jx in different suits count as ..	

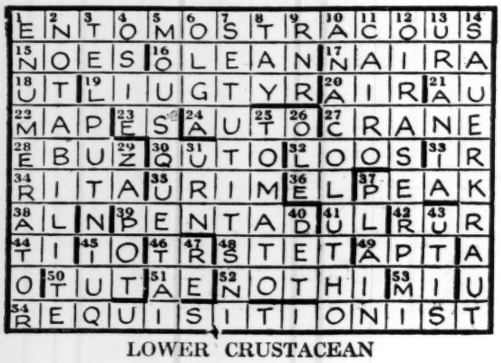
	♠ AJ94 ♥ K65 ♦ J3 ♣ AK87	
♠ KQ1032 ♥ Q87 ♦ A72 ♣ 53	N W E S	♠ 76 ♥ 1043 ♦ KQ865 ♣ Q96
	♠ 85 ♥ AJ92 ♦ 1094 ♣ J1042	

Here are four hands dealt at random. Their Honour-trick valuation is as follows:

South:	Ace of Hearts ..	1	Total 1 Honour-tricks
West:	KQ10 of Spades ..	1½	„ 2½ „
	Ace of Diamonds	1	
North:	AK of Clubs ..	2	
	Ace of Spades ..	1	„ 3½ „
	King of Hearts ..	½	
East:	KQ of Diamonds	1	„ 1 „
	Total for the four hands		8 „

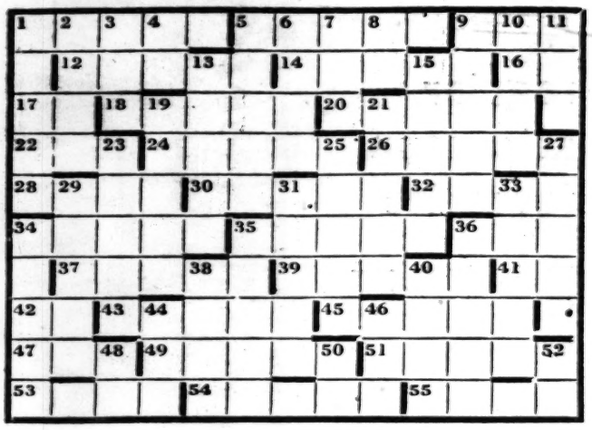
Note.—This aggregate is slightly on the low side, since two Queens, and all four Knaves, play no part in the Honour-trick valuation of this particular deal.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



LOWER CRUSTACEAN

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

ACROSS

1. How like it is—and yet so warm inside.
5. My plot and I are muddled; trust me still.
9 *rev.* Our common ancestry has been denied.
12. A Masefield play's within; I'm empty, shrill.
14. If Cæsar of a dog should write, 'twere I.
16. In Robbie's brook, and of the Chaldees, too.
17. Robin without his air—the years slip by.
18. Call forth. (20) An Eastern table-land will do.
22. Riddle. (24) Behold a messenger—in drink.
26. Join, good round oath. (28) At Gare du Nord will be.
30. Go sneakingly about. (32) A spice, I think.
34. And when you take a count—why then, you're me.
35. Cotton? or celluloid? (36 *rev.*) I'm long, they say.
37. Diseased. (39) The ox can't keep a decent course.
41. A coin becomes a god, up Trondjem way.
42. Columbia. (43) There appears a hostile force.
45. Old me was once of rottenness the type.
47. Remember—'tis a sahib that I need.
49. A boneback (that's contorted you, you snipe).
51. Fattish. (53) Some birds of cassowary breed.
54. The salt's — located 'neath the chimney-stack.
55. What mind and body seek is coming back.

DOWN.

1. A twisted weapon finds itself in fruit.
2. I measure land, clothe beasts—come seek me now.
3. Frustum. (4) The heart am I of tuberous root.
5. Ancestral home [perhaps] of Chu-Chin-Chow.
6. We're Sundae's children—full of glace, they say.
7. Then bring me milk—I've turned an old friend down.
8. Two-thirds. (9) Get up, and face the other way.
10. Sez puss. (11) A bow? or Sybil's favourite town?
13. No, not a quadruped—a hardy breed.
15. Your local chieftains summon you to prayer.
19. If Vi and I should eat—there's all you need.
21. Enough: Canadian leaf is crumpled there!
23. So Cockneys spoke of Joris; wear away.
25. The old beans have the young beans well in hand.
27. Ywest is ywest—and we must bake to-day.
29. Blot out. (31) Now mix thy strains, Thalia's band!
33. This railroad leader paralyses me.
34. Were needed here the pen of Foch himself.
35. The bishop's headgear, squashed, send back (says he).
48, 36. Our shelves will show you what is "on the shelf."
38. This lane, that has a turning, leads to gold.
40. This above all, to thine own self be me.
44. Nose, noseless. (46) Sheepdog of a General's fold.
50. Yes, signor. (52) No, not yet; six months 'twill be.

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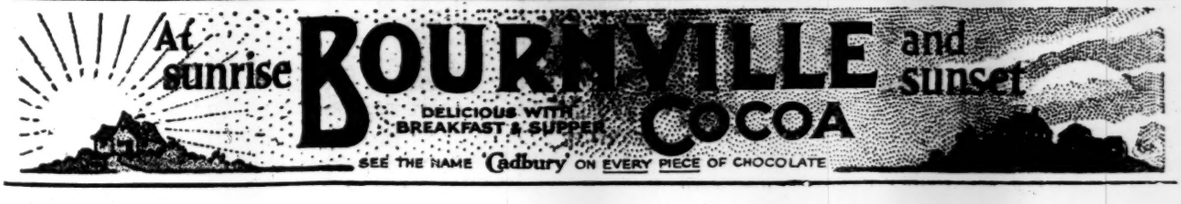

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By TOREADOR

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND THE SLUMP IN COMMODITY PRICES—THE TRAGEDY OF UNITED MOLASSES—HECTOR AND THE WHALE

THESE have been days of mourning in the City of London. The speculative public has kept a fast more strictly than any Lenten penance—after all what has there been but bitter herbs to eat in the recent reports of leading American and British companies?—while the investing public has been surfeited with the somewhat indigestible food of Greek and Chilean loans and Lancashire Cotton Corporation debentures. So there has been plenty of time to meditate upon the failures and mistakes of unlimited private enterprise. Let us consider the tragedy of United Molasses. I venture to suggest to Sir Henry Strakosch that he also should meditate upon the lessons of this company's report, which is typical of many others. Sir Henry has fashioned an unmoral world, as though he were Aldous Huxley turned economist, in which deserving or wicked traders are afflicted alike by the haphazard maldistribution of the world supplies of gold. He can see no evidence of wilful or stupid over-production as the cause of the precipitate fall in commodity prices. Most of us will agree that Sir Henry has done a great service in calling attention to the evil effects of the unintelligent working of the gold standard system, but why should he spoil his case by ignoring the evil effects of foolish or greedy private enterprise? Does he deny that unscrupulous or irresponsible company promoting led up to the excess capacity in the artificial silk, gramophone or tin mining industries? Or that the American Copper Exporters Inc. brought trouble on themselves by pegging copper at an unfair price of 18 cents per lb.? Or that the rush to "get-rich-quickly" in the American oilfields is the basic cause of the over-production of oil? Does Sir Henry pretend that companies never attempt to force up prices or that, when an industry is making exorbitant profits, there is never a scramble into that industry from outside?

* * *

But let us return to United Molasses. This company saw the chance of making millions out of the steadily increasing demand for industrial alcohol for which molasses was the cheapest and most suitable raw material. The consumption of molasses for this and other purposes—such as cattle foods—had assumed such proportions that the directors of the company believed that there would not be sufficient molasses produced from the sugar cane of the West Indies to supply the needs of Europe and America. So they embarked on an ambitious programme of development by contracting for new supplies from the sugar plantations in Africa and the Far East, by building a £3,345,000 fleet of tankers to carry its produce and by erecting nearly £1,500,000 worth of tank storage to hold its stocks. In other words, they attempted to corner the molasses trade of the world. The annual production of molasses by 1930 had reached a total of from six to seven million tons and the United Molasses were then handling about one-third. By controlling the means of transport between the new sources of supply and the centres of consumption the directors no doubt believed that they could dominate the trade. The results were disastrous for their shareholders. In the last half of 1930 the fall in the prices of farm produce caused a slump in the demand for molasses as cattle food, while the American distillers of industrial alcohol were so badly hit by the trade depression that they failed to implement their purchase contracts for molasses. Rather than force their best customers out of business the company had perforce to take back £500,000 worth of molasses into its tanks. And the 1,000,000 tons of molasses which it had contracted for in the East proved superfluous.

* * *

Can Sir Henry Strakosch now claim that errors of judgment on the part of the *entrepreneur* have nothing to do with the over-production of certain commodities? Mr. Kielberg, chairman of United Molasses, told his fellow-shareholders on April 11th, 1930: "Our tankers form a very important part of our equipment and their future profitable employment does not cause us one moment's anxiety or doubt." This week the directors reported: "We have for months past been unable to find remunerative employment for those ships which we could not employ in our own trade." A year ago, when the trade depression was beginning to show itself, the directors declared: "The widespread and varied uses of molasses tend to stabilise the company's business. . . . We have every reason to believe that the net profits for 1930 will show further expansion." This week they reported a "collapse of the world's molasses markets," and the Continental business closed because "it is impossible to import cane molasses at prices that can compete with the local beet molasses." The result was such a fall in the market price of molasses that the company had to write down its stocks by £1,364,420. Capital reserves of £2,651,181, which were foolishly depleted by the free bonus issue of £1,492,044 ordinary shares last year, have now been completely exhausted, together with the general reserve of £350,000. The balance sheet does not disclose a liquid position and a loss of £64,260 is carried forward. The £1 ordinary shares, which received 25 per cent. cash dividends and a 50 per cent. capital bonus last year, have fallen from a height of £8½ in 1929 to the present level of 8s. 6d.—from the realm of the "blue chips" to that of the "dirt track." The market capitalisation of the company in the boom period was £27,300,000, to-day it is £3,300,000. Every speculator in Liverpool curses the name of United Molasses. The directors keep their seats except Sir James Cooper, who resigned to go and help the Bank of England.

* * *

Here is another story of how the excesses of private enterprise accentuate the fall in commodity prices. It is the modern version of the story of Jonah and the whale. The whaling companies have been swallowed up by their catches: whaling has been stopped by the glut of oil. In the paradisal days of 1929 the whaling companies obtained £30 per ton for the oil which they sold to the margarine companies. Greedy for the enormous profits which such a price allowed, they rapidly expanded their fleets and improved the gun capacity of their whalers. In the spring of 1930 they were discussing the formation of a whaling "pool" which could bargain more effectively with the big buyer—Unilever—but some of the companies, a little nervous of the market, went behind the backs of the others and sold their 1930-31 catch forward to Unilever at £25 per ton. The market price thereupon dropped to £18½ per ton. Hector Whaling, one of the most important of the companies, missed the market, but, nevertheless, decided to send out its fleet last autumn with its catch unsold. More whales than ever before were slaughtered, and Hector Whaling is now bringing back a record catch which will have to go into storage. Unilever can buy no more oil—the catch which they had contracted to buy has exceeded all expectations—so the whaling fleets will lie up in the 1931-32 season. Whale oil is now a nominal market at £12 10s. per ton; Hector Whaling shares, which were as high as 36s. 6d., are now unsellable at 7s. 6d. This tragedy, like that of United Molasses, is partly the result of stupidity, greed and recklessness. The pity of it is that whale oil will deteriorate in tanks after a time, but inside the whale it would improve and the whale would be happy.

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Assets Exceed £13.000.000
LIFE Established 1837 · FIRE & ACCIDENT 1885
Chief Offices, PERTH & LONDON

COMPANY MEETING

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY

INCREASED NEW BUSINESS.

The annual general meeting of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society was held on March 31st at Norwich.

Mr. Michael Falcon (the President), reviewing the past year's results, said that, omitting the boom years, 1919-20, they had established a new high record of business written in the United Kingdom at £4,677,475, being £429,694 over the corresponding figure of 1929. The total new business from all sources was £8,033,634, an increase of £141,973. It was with pleasure that they could say once more that the cost of writing their large new business was most moderate, being only 63.42 per cent. of the new premiums, while the level ratio on their total premiums of £3,432,635 was only 14.05 per cent., a reduction of 2s. 2d. per cent. on the previous year.

With regard to the assets of the Society, the test of their stability was that in the aggregate the Stock Exchange valuation had shown improvement during 1930, but, in order to be able to say that each security was at least of market value, they had only had to write off £353,538. On the other hand, no credit had been taken for appreciation of securities where the market values exceeded book values, and this constituted a very substantial reserve. During the quinquennial period the net rate of interest earned on the mean fund had averaged over 5 per cent., and last year, allowing for increased taxation, it came out at £4 19s. 7d. per cent.

RECORD BONUSES.

The Quinquennial Valuation of the Life Insurance Society showed the handsome profit in the five years of £4,442,389, a figure unprecedented in the Society's existence over a period of 122 years, and which had been arrived at after making provision for every possible liability, and thus not only were their Whole Life and Endowment Assurance contracts provided for on a 2½ per cent. basis, but material additions had been made to the reserves to safeguard the policyholders' interests in such a way as to discount during the quinquennium upon which they were entering the effect of any possible extension on adverse trading conditions. The bonuses under Whole Life and Endowment Assurances were the largest in the long history of the Society, the percentage of increase on what they were able to do in 1925 being from 10 to 15 per cent., depending upon age and class of policy, which would provide a welcome addition to the policies of their members.

Whole Life bonuses now ranged from £2 14s. per cent. to £4 15s. per cent. according to age attained. Endowment Assurances ranged from £2 2s. per cent. at maturity age fifty, to £3 per cent. at maturity age seventy-six. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

COMPANY MEETING

ODHAMS PRESS

MR. ODHAMS ON COMPANY'S PROGRESS.

The eleventh annual general meeting of Odhams Press, Ltd., was held on Tuesday at the Connaught Rooms, Gt. Queen Street, W.C.

Mr. W. J. B. Odhams (the chairman) said that the net profit had now reached the very satisfactory figure of £261,268. That warranted them, even at a time of such uncertainty as the present, in continuing to pay a dividend at the same rate as last year, namely, 17½ per cent. on the ordinary shares of the company. Referring to the *Daily Herald* he said that they had already had two successful experiences in large circulation journals—*John Bull* and *The People*. In 1922, the net weekly sale of *John Bull* had fallen to under 300,000, but by the intelligent employment of capital, it had been re-established as a highly profitable journal, with a net sale of over a million and a quarter a week. In 1924 the net sale of *The People* had also been under 300,000 weekly, but last year the net sales had been increased to well over two and a half millions weekly. With regard to the *Daily Herald*, in March last year the circulation was 300,000 and now they were over 1,150,000 copies per day and were still growing. The progress that had been achieved, both from the points of view of circulation and advertisements, must be considered satisfactory.

The two chief events of the company's story of the year 1930 were the *Daily Herald* and the opening of the new works in Manchester. For some years the ever-increasing sales of *The People* had strained the capacity of the machinery to cope with its continual development, a further problem having been the supply of late Saturday news to the North of England when many hours had to be deducted for the transit from London.

Last year he had stated that the business of the company continued to grow. They had had a larger gross turnover, a larger gross profit and a larger net profit than in any previous year of the company's existence. The year 1930 in all those particulars had exceeded 1929, and they were also able to show improvement in a no less important item, employment.

As to the future, all the indications of good progress were most favourable. In the billposting business the results so far this year and the prospects were as good as in 1930. The progress in their weekly newspapers and journals had been excellent, and there appeared to be every sign of even better results during the present year. With regard to the *Daily Herald*, they were arranging for additional capital which they had every reason to believe would show excellent results to the company. The new capital would be in the form of debentures which, in course of time, would be repaid.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

COMPANY MEETING

VICKERS LIMITED

YEAR'S RESULT NOT UNSATISFACTORY.

CONDITION OF COMPANY'S INDUSTRIES.

THE Annual General Meeting of Vickers, Ltd., was held on Monday last at the Hotel Victoria, London.

General the Hon. Sir Herbert A. Lawrence, G.C.B. (the Chairman), in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said, in part: Although, compared with 1929, the net profit shows a reduction of £166,046, the result of the year's working is not unsatisfactory having regard to the very difficult times through which we are passing.

The reduction in armaments, following the Washington Pact, has resulted in a serious decrease in warship construction, the present output being about one-fifteenth of the pre-war tonnage. As, prior to the War, the shipyards of your Company were mainly engaged on naval shipbuilding, this change has had a particularly adverse effect. Through the strenuous efforts of the management of our shipyards, we have established ourselves as one of the leading builders of passenger liners in the country, and when the tide turns the Company should be one of the first to benefit. The exclusion of armaments from the British Export Credits Scheme has lost work to the value of millions of pounds which would otherwise have been secured for this country.

The 1930 results of the English Steel Corporation show a considerable improvement compared with those of 1929—the first year of the merger. A trading profit—excluding depreciation—was earned, but after writing off special expenditure, including expenses and other losses due to the closing down of works, a loss was incurred.

Our Aviation works have been largely engaged during the past year in the production of new models to replace those which have rendered such good service to the Air Force for several years. We have also devoted considerable attention to commercial aircraft.

It is time that we faced facts. Production costs are of two kinds—controllable and non-controllable—and it is hopeless for manufacturers, by rationalisation, by the installation of new plant, by reduction in administrative costs, to attempt to bring down the cost of the product to a competitive price if the non-controllable costs, such as taxes, rates and transport, are to continue at exorbitant levels.

There is no industrialist in this country to-day who wishes to reduce the standard of living of the manual worker, but there is none who does not desire to reduce the standard of production costs so that every worker can earn a living.

I would again emphasise that despite the discouraging outlook, the great strength of your Company lies in its financial resources.

The report was unanimously adopted, and the dividends as recommended were approved.

RNLI

THIS WEEK'S ANNIVERSARY

LIFE-BOAT SERVICES OF THE PAST:

On April 2nd and 3rd, 1917, the Motor Life-boat at Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, rescued 41 lives from two steamers, the "Tregarth" and "Boscastle," both in Government service, which had been wrecked in a strong gale, with snow squalls, and a very heavy sea. The Coxswain was awarded the Bronze Medal for his gallantry.

THIS WORK HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR 106 YEARS.

Over 623,000 lives rescued. 11 LIVES EVERY WEEK!

YOU CAN HELP by sending your **5/- TO-DAY,** and remembering the Life-Boats in your Will.

They depend entirely on voluntary contributions.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY, *Honorary Treasurer.* GEORGE F. SHEE, M.A., *Secretary.*

ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION,
Life-Boat House, 22 Charing Cross Road, LONDON, W.C.2.

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COMPANY MEETING

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LIMITED

SATISFACTORY RESULTS DESPITE WORLD CONDITIONS

THE DYESTUFFS AND FERTILISER INDUSTRIES

SIR HARRY McGOWAN ON THE POSITION

The fourth annual general meeting of Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited, was held on Tuesday, March 31st, at the Central Hall, Westminster, S.W.

Sir Harry McGowan, K.B.E. (the Chairman), after referring to the loss they had sustained through the deaths of Lord Melchett (the late Chairman) and the Earl of Birkenhead, and the appointment of himself as Chairman of the company, said that during the past few months there had been so much discussion of the present depression that one might be inclined to take it as read. Their trading results, however, were but a reflection of the conditions of trade which they had experienced, and he must therefore ask shareholders to bear with him while he laid before them one or two figures which marked out the severity of the present industrial crisis. Comparing 1930 with 1929, the volume of physical production showed a decrease in the United Kingdom of 8 per cent., in Germany 16 per cent., Canada 14 per cent., and the United States of 17 per cent., while most other industrial countries had had similar falls. The major part of that slowing down of industrial activity was due to a diminution in the export trades. Expressed in monetary values, the United Kingdom showed a fall of 22 per cent., France 15 per cent., Germany 11 per cent., Italy 19 per cent. and the United States nearly 26 per cent. Even eliminating the effects of the change in the price level, British exports had fallen by over 18 per cent. So long as Great Britain was dependent upon her export trade, any given percentage fall in its volume was much more damaging to her than a similar percentage fall was to France or Germany or the United States.

DECLINE IN EMPLOYMENT.

The shrinkage in the volume of production had necessarily brought with it a decline in the volume of employment. Taking the latest figures and comparing them with the position twelve months before, unemployment had increased in this country by 72 per cent., in Germany by 48 per cent., in Italy by 55 per cent., in Canada by 49 per cent., in Australia by 81 per cent., and in the United States by 149 per cent. Those figures proved without question how world-wide the depression was. It had been accompanied by a rapid fall in the wholesale price level of primary commodities.

The products which their companies manufactured were largely what might be termed secondary commodities. That was to say they were not consumed by the general public as such, but formed part of the raw materials of a large number of other industries. Their chief effort was devoted to the dual task of ensuring that their products were of the highest quality thoroughly fitted to perform the specific services required of them and that in their production the utmost economy and efficiency were practised.

THE DYESTUFFS INDUSTRY.

Since they met last year the Dyestuffs Act had been renewed until December 31st, 1931. He felt that in taking that action Parliament had acted very wisely. The dyestuffs industry, although neither large in respect of its turnover nor particularly remunerative to those engaged in it, rendered a great national service, and he hoped that nothing would be done to hinder its continued development in this country. For that reason he regretted that the suggestion of the further enquiry proposed in Parliament had not been adopted by H.M. Government. It was a step they would have welcomed; one from which they had nothing to fear. When State protection or direct encouragement was given to a particular industry, the fullest disclosure of the essential facts was in every way desirable.

World competition last year had been very severe, but he believed that insane price-cutting was ceasing, so that producers all over the world were beginning to co-operate more with one another to their mutual benefit. The quality of their dyestuffs was now unquestioned and their prices continued to be steadily reduced *pari passu* with the development of research and the growing efficiency of production. They were not unmindful of the difficulties of the textile trades, and they felt a responsibility for keeping prices as low as possible in order that they might contribute to their revival.

THE FERTILISER INDUSTRY.

In 1930, the index of prices for agricultural products showed a drop of 22 per cent. in the principal countries of the world. The farmers' purchasing power had fallen away and the great increase in the use of nitrogen fertilisers of recent years had been arrested. For that reason their output of sulphate of ammonia at Billingham had been considerably below capacity in recent months. That situation had been accentuated by the sulphate made as a by-product by gas, coke oven and other undertakings necessarily having the first claim on the impaired markets.

BASELESS RUMOURS DENIED.

The condition of the nitrogen industry appeared to have given rise to many baseless rumours about their factory at Billingham. It was said, for instance, that the works there were about to be closed down entirely, that only a trifling use was being made of the existing capacity, and that that large plant was already out-of-date. Allegations of that kind were equally untrue. Naturally, they were much concerned to see some of their most modern plant operating on a scale of merely partial production, but it must be remembered that, when they had embarked nearly three years ago upon the extension of their nitrogen plant, that action had been fully supported by the study of the market situation which was then made. The additional manufacturing capacity created would have been in full operation to-day had not the balance between supply and demand for agricultural products been abruptly broken by a great increase in agricultural productivity leading to an unprecendented fall in market price. The situation had been aggravated by the absurd lengths to which economic nationalism had been pushed by the erection of new plants in many of the smaller European countries, on the ground that they must be self-contained in that branch of production.

RELATIONS WITH GERMAN SYNDICATE.

Their relations with the largest makers in the world—the I.G. Farbenindustrie and the German Nitrogen Syndicate—continued to be satisfactory. As a direct result of the friendly co-operation between their companies an agreement had been arrived at last summer between the principal European nitrogen producers. That agreement, known as the Nitrogen Industry Convention, to which the Chilean producers were also parties, had been entered into for a preliminary period of one year with a view to arriving at a more permanent basis for the future. The agreement had had the effect of regulating synthetic production to demand, of stabilising prices for nitrogen at a rather lower level than obtained during the previous fertiliser year, and of providing orderly marketing arrangements. The interests of both consumers and producers had thus been safeguarded. Discussions were now proceeding for the future regulation of the industry, which, he trusted, would prove successful.

BILLINGHAM AS A PRODUCER OF GENERAL CHEMICALS.

Their own nitrogen works were equipped with absolutely modern plant of the highest efficiency, capable of production at a cost which they believed to be lower than that of any other world producer. In speaking of Billingham, it was essential that one should realise that those works were much more than a producer of fertilisers. They were the home of their latest and most modern plants for the manufacture of nitrogenous products for other than agricultural purposes, and of a variety of other chemicals, notably metallic sodium, sodium cyanide, methanol, electrolytic caustic and chlorine and acetic acid. The demand for those products formed part of their general chemical business and was not affected by the depression the fertiliser industry.

FOREIGN AND EMPIRE EXPORT MARKETS.

Over the past four or five years the companies' export trade had shown a marked expansion. The secret had lain in the establishment of their own widespread selling organisations in the respective markets. During the past two years, their interests in Australia had been entirely reorganised and consolidated. Provision had been made for joint development for the manufacture of nitrogenous fertilisers when the demand for that product reached a level which would justify domestic manufacture. 1930 had been the first complete year in which I.C.I. fertilisers had been available in the Commonwealth, and sales had been well up to estimates. Similar steps had also been taken to consolidate the various interests in Australia for the manufacture and sale of ammonia for various industrial uses. Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand had earned profits in excess of the previous year. He had every confidence that Australia would, in due course, emerge from her present economic difficulties and regain sound financial conditions. When recovery had been made, there was no doubt that their Australian business would continue to expand.

In Canada, the depression had extended throughout the year. Gross sales by Canadian Industries, Ltd., had fallen very little short of the preceding year, and its dividend had only been slightly less than that for 1929. The profits of the South African company, African Explosives & Industries, Ltd., jointly owned by the De Beers company and themselves, had shown an increase for the year 1930, due mainly to increased manufacturing efficiency, as the volume done had only been a little larger. The net profit for 1930 had touched a new high record and they had benefited by a larger dividend. A new fertiliser mixing factory had been opened at Salisbury, Rhodesia, and the trade in that territory showed a gratifying increase.

At the Natal factory a further superphosphate unit was now being added. A synthetic ammonia plant, sufficient for local demands, was being built at the factory at Modderfontein, outside Johannesburg, and plants for the oxidation to nitric acid of the resulting ammonia were being erected at the same works as well as at Somerset West, Cape Town. The use of those modern processes would greatly reduce cost. When the present agricultural depression passed, a resumption of the steady increase in the demand for fertilisers in South Africa might be looked for. Close connections had been established with the development of mining in Northern Rhodesia. The day would come when that development would necessitate the erection of a new factory in Northern Rhodesia for explosives and other products required by the mines.

THE YEAR'S PROFITS.

The net profit for the year 1930 amounted to £4,473,392, as compared with a profit of £5,780,208 for the previous year, or a decrease of 22¼ per cent. With the appropriation this year of £500,000, the Central Obsolescence Fund would amount to £4,500,000. The manufacturing subsidiary companies had certain obsolescence reserves of their own, which exceeded £8,000,000. Over £2,000,000 had been spent out of revenue in maintaining plants in up-to-date condition. The general reserve account stood at £12,725,000. The dividend on the preference shares for the two half years and an interim dividend on the ordinary shares had been paid, and the directors now recommended a final dividend on the ordinary shares of 3 per cent., making a total dividend on those shares of 6 per cent. for the year.

A SPECIFIC DECLARATION CONCERNING PROFITS.

Although it had been stated at previous annual meetings by the late Lord Melchett, he (the chairman) regretted the necessity to repeat, as he did with all emphasis he could command, that no part of the profits of their company, either for the current year or for any of the preceding years, had been drawn from profits on the sale of investments or securities. Such profits had, indeed, been made, both by their company and by various subsidiary companies. In the latter case, under their policy of centralising all finance, such profits had been transferred to the balance-sheet of Imperial Chemical Industries in the only manner in which they could be transferred, that was, by way of dividend. Notwithstanding that method of transfer, those profits had never been credited to their profit and loss account. The published annual profits of the company had thus never been inflated by fortuitous profits of that nature. On the contrary, in every case they had been dealt with as capital profits available only for capital purposes. As such they had either been openly carried to the credit of the general reserve as in 1928, or applied in writing down the capital value of one or other of the assets of their company. He trusted that that specific declaration would serve once and for all to put an end to statements or suggestions that any part of the profits of the company had been derived from speculation or dealings in securities.

RESEARCH ESSENTIAL.

Their annual expenditure upon research work was heavy. Research, however, was an essential activity of the chemical industry and, unless it was pursued unceasingly, they could not hope to maintain their position in the forefront of world enterprise. Research expenditure was mainly directed to the four following objects: (1) Controlling and directing of the modernisation and concentration of manufacture; (2) improving the quality and reducing the cost of their numerous products; (3) developing analogous manufactures and manufacturing methods; and (4) investigating allied processes offered by outside interests.

The effect of their consistent research policy showed itself in three directions. First, alternative processes were worked out for the manufacture of existing products, while other allied products were also developed. For instance, they had begun, or were about to begin, the manufacture of a large number of products not previously made in this country. Those included synthetic acetic acid, tracer shot gun cartridges, various products from waste gases, nitro-cellulose plastics for linoleum, the new concentrated fertilisers he had mentioned, and a large addition to the range of their dyestuffs. Secondly, it contributed to a reduction of costs, and thus tended to preserve the margin of profit which was constantly being encroached upon by the downward movement of the market prices which their commodities commanded. Thirdly, it solved problems put to them by other manufacturers, in connection with the application of their products to the manufacture of their goods. Finally, it served gradually but persistently to perfect existing processes of manufacture by the elimination of small but troublesome difficulties, so leading *in cumulo* to a marked improvement in the final efficiency of the product.

ORGANISATION AND ECONOMY.

The art of organising a large industrial combination such as theirs had not yet, he thought, reached finality. The problem was to retain a general unity of direction while constantly progressing in efficiency, securing every advantage of internal and external economies, and yet preserving individual and local initiative, vision, originality and freshness of outlook. There must be such flexibility and freedom that new ideas could flow without friction backwards and forwards between the centre and the circumference. Contact with their customers ranged over a front which was almost world-wide. Every movement there arising from variations in demand, changes in fashion, the emergence of new competition, the rise and fall of other industries, had to be interpreted back to the central management in order that the appropriate modifications must be made in manufacturing activities. It was a problem of co-ordination resting ultimately upon full and sympathetic understanding of human relations. In that field they believed that during the past four years they had made constant progress.

After a period of concentration extending over that length of time, during which they had reached a fuller experience and understanding of their various problems and difficulties, they had now moderated that tendency towards centralisation. A new scheme of internal administrative organisation had been brought into force which was designed to increase the burden of responsiblity in various degrees further down the line which stretched continuously from the central direction to their innumerable customers. Responsibility was the essential element of training for managerial work, and they would thus best secure continuity in a high level of executive ability, so necessary as death and retirement caused gaps in their leading personnel. They were confident also that the changes which had been made would result in very considerable economies of a permanent character.

They were prosecuting an unremitting search for manufacturing economies. They had extended that enquiry to their administrative organisations. Every expenditure that could not be fully justified was being eliminated. Other manufacturers, they had no doubt, were following the same course. As dividends fell, following the lower profits emerging from a lower price level, every individual would be compelled to make a similar examination of his own expenditure. The same ruthless, searching examination must be made by national and local government authorities, and followed by essential action. For that reason they welcomed the appointment of a Government Economy Committee.

LABOUR RELATIONS.

Their relations with all their employees and workers continued to be of the most friendly description. The works councils were functioning admirably. Representatives of the management and of the workers met at regular intervals in order to discuss problems common to their respective parts and to seek solutions which were mutually acceptable and beneficial.

OIL FROM COAL.

The late Lord Melchett had told them last year that a pilot plant for the conversion of coal into petrol and fuel oil by hydrogenation had been put into operation. As a result of their Research work during the past year they had secured a marked fall in the working costs of the coal-oil process. The quality of the petrol produced was beyond question. It was equal in its anti-knock qualities, for instance, to the finest grades at present on the market. So far as they were aware, they were the only company in this country or the Empire which had brought to a successful conclusion the difficult technical operation of hydrogenating coal into petrol with but a small residue of waste product of no value. Their process had nothing in common with low temperature carbonisation processes, which produced small quantities of liquid fuel as a by-product only. The eventual establishment of that industry in Great Britain, he need hardly add, would be of immense significance in the protection of the national economic and strategic positions.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF I.C.I.

All experience proved that the process of emerging from a period of industrial depression was normally longer than that occupied by the descent therein. Recent months had afforded some evidence that the fall in the price level had slowed down. Within a short period an upward trend might appear. Prospects in 1931 depended upon that movement. For the first two months their volume of business compared favourably with the average of the later months of 1930. The curves of industrial activity in 1931 would reflect the degree of confidence in the stability of prices at home and abroad. Shareholders would understand, therefore, if he refused to prophesy the results that they would show this year. It would be sufficient to assure them that the directors would continue to search for efficiency and economy. The dividend for 1931 depended almost entirely on the volume of business secured and the movement of prices.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.